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INDIAN CRACKDOWN ON TAMIL MILITANTS

THE GOVERNMENT in Colombo must be overjoyed by the sudden turn of events in the South Indian State of Tamil Nadu which has been regarded as a safe haven for the Sri Lankan Tamil militants. The Tamil Nadu police in a well co-ordinated series of dawn raids conducted on 9 November in and around Madras rounded up several hundred Tamil militants, including the main leaders of the five Tamil liberation groups, LTTE, EPRLF, EROS, PLOT and TELO.

Most of the Tamil militant leaders were picked up from their homes and taken to the police station where they were reportedly finger-printed and photographed. One militant leader commented that they were treated like petty criminals.

It is also learnt that in the course of these raids on about 15 militant strongholds, the police seized a large quantity of weapons, including surface-to-air missiles, rocket launchers, machine guns, automatic rifles, grenades and heavy artillery. It was the first time it became known that the Tamil militants were in possession of surface-to-air missiles.

Most of the militants detained were later released but their leaders were put under house arrest and guards placed outside their homes.

Immediate Cause

The immediate cause of the crackdown against the militants was attributed to a shooting incident which occurred on 1 November at Choolaimedu, Thirvalluvarpuram in Madras. It is reported that a fight broke out arising from a dispute between the local people and some members of the EPRLF. The EPRLF members were overwhelmed by a crowd of locals and the former retreated into their residence and opened fire in self-defence. A local social worker, Thirunavukkarasu, aged 24, was killed and two others were injured. The incident sparked off a series of protests by the local population who demanded severe action against the EPRLF members. Twelve were arrested and it is reported that some of them have been charged with murder.

Close on the heels of the shooting incident, there was another incident near Orathanad in Thanjavur district on the night of 1 November involving some members belonging to the PLOT, another Tamil militant group.

According to a report in The Hindu, three PLOT members allegedly went to a nearby village and their misbehaviour was objected to by the local villagers. The three left the scene but later came back with several armed men and raided the village. The police who were called in rounded up the raiders.

Mr. V. P. Chinton, CPI(M),MLA, who is generally supportive of the Sri Lankan Tamils, described the shooting incident as an 'alarming development'. In a statement he said, "In a shocking incident in Madras, two youths have fallen victims to unprovoked firing by a group of Sri Lanka Tamil militants. Some others are also reported to have suffered injuries. Arms, including grenades, automatic rifles and shotguns appear to have been seized from them.

"Another incident at Orathanad where some Tamil militants raided a village with automatic weapons is also reported. A few weeks ago, the Tamil militants resorted to use of arms at Vedaranyam against innocent citizens. All these are alarming developments. The Tamil Nadu government and the Police must safeguard the lives of the people of the State by seizing all the firearms from the militants in the State. The State Government should also grant immediate relief to the families of the victims", Mr. Chinton added.

Democratic Opinion Outraged

The respected English daily, The Hindu, which has generally been sympathetic to the plight of the Sri Lankan Tamils, in regard to the shooting incident commented that those involved had "turned murderously against civil society in Madras ... when those professing loyalty to the goal of 'national liberation', and also India's good offices in the matter of finding a way out of a neighbouring country's ethnic crisis repay the hospitality the people of this nation have provided ungrudgingly with terroristic machine gunning on the streets of Madras, democratic public opinion has every justification for feeling horribly outraged . . ."

While these incidents of violence might be regarded as contributory causes for the police action against the Tamil militants, political observers see a much more fundamental reason behind the widespread nature and scale of the police operation in taking several hundred Tamil militants into custody and seizing their weapons. The wide

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MILITANTS IN TAMIL NADU

FOLLOWING the breakdown of the second round of talks in Bhutan between the delegations of the Sri Lankan government and Tamil groups in August 1985, the Indian government ordered the expulsion from India of three Sri Lankan Tamils, A. S. Balasingam, S. C. Chandrahasan and N. Satyendra. The reaction to the expulsion was unexpected and bewildered the Indian authorities. The opposition to this move was almost unanimous from all shades of political opinion in India. The Indian press was loud in its denunciation of the expulsions as a clumsy blunder. As far as Tamil Nadu was concerned, there were mass demonstrations and hartals demanding the withdrawal of the expulsion orders. The ruling AIADMK and the opposition DMK and other political parties in Tamil Nadu competed with each other in raising their powerful voices for the immediate return of the three expelled Sri Lankan Tamils. And New Delhi was compelled to relent in the face of this massive display of profound solidarity with the Sri Lanka Tamils. This was little over a year ago.

This month, the Tamil Nadu police in a blitz-krieg-like operation raided several homes and strongholds of the Tamil militant groups in and around Madras, took into custody several hundred militants including their entire leadership and confiscated what was described as large quantities of weapons. According to sources close to the militant groups, those taken into custody, without exception, were finger-printed, photographed and treated in a shabby fashion.

That this operation was authorised by the Tamil Nadu Chief Minister, M. G. Ramachandran, whose sympathy and support for the Sri Lankan Tamil cause has hitherto been unqualified, cannot be doubted. Nor could it be disputed that it had the complete approval of New Delhi.

Not a single political party at the national level or Tamil Nadu level voiced any serious objection to the action of the police. Even DMK leader, M. Karunanithi, who has been questioning the adequacy of the support given to alleviate the sufferings of the Tamil people and called for a more direct and strident stance against the Colombo government, found himself unable to make any demonstrative move against the action of the Tamil Nadu police. Nedumaran, who had concentrated his political activity since July 1983 on the single issue of espousing the cause of the Sri Lanka Tamils, found himself in a helpless position.

The Sri Lankan Tamil issue has been the one and only issue on which all the political parties, from the extreme right to the extreme left, in India have adopted a uniform and united position. Whenever the issue was taken up for discussion or debate in the Indian Parliament, there was a virtual unanimity of opinion in expressing support and sympathy for the Tamil people and condemnation of the actions of the Sri Lankan government. However when the subject was recently raised in the Lok Sabha, only a few members belonging to the Congress(I) and AIADMK spoke, and they spoke in support of the action by the Tamil Nadu police against the Tamil militant leadership.

Most significant was the absence of any popular supportive reaction from the people of Tamil Nadu in opposition to the move against the Tamil militants. There were none of the familiar spontaneous angry scenes of several thousand ordinary people marching and milling in the streets of Tamil Nadu. On the contrary, while the reaction of the people by and large was subdued, the response of the popular media has been one of justification of the police action. Some politicians and commentators even called for tougher action against the militants.

How come that the almost inexhaustible reservoir of support and goodwill for the Tamil people and the militants in India and in particular Tamil Nadu had been dissipated to such an extent ? The Tamil militant groups should examine themselves and their actions in seeking an answer to this question. The shooting incident in Madras on 1 November involving some members of the EPRLF only provided an excuse for a course of action which had already been predetermined. Leading members of some militant groups would appear to have forgotten that they are in another country. They seem to have ignored the elementary fact that the freedom of movement and action they enjoyed in India depended very much on their capacity to retain popular support. They would seem to have failed to ensure that their conduct and actions did not manifest an insensitivity to the feelings and opinions of the ordinary people of Tamil Nadu. Some of their actions have been described as an abuse of the generosity and hospitality they received. Many of their highly publicised pronouncements, claims and assertions have caused acute embarrassment to the Indian and Tamil Nadu governments.

Many Tamils may have been shocked and disturbed by the recent turn of events in Tamil Nadu and especially by the action taken against the Tamil militants. But to the discerning, it was neither surprising nor unpredictable.

The Indian government has unambiguously set out its areas of interest as far as developments in Sri Lanka are concerned. It also has clearly stated the parameters within which it seeks to assist in the resolution of the ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka. In the context of the stalemate in its military confrontation with the Tamil militants, the Sri Lankan government has been virtually compelled much against its wish to come up with the latest set of proposals. These proposals have been amended many times following negotiations with the TULF and the government of India. The position of the Indian government in regard to these proposals has been made clear by no less a person than Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi.

As far as those who claim to lead the Tamil people in Sri Lanka are concerned, it is absolutely crucial that they approach the problems facing the Tamil people with a full and realistic appreciation of all the forces that are at work, both nationally and internationally, including the recent developments in Tamil Nadu concerning the Tamil militants. What is perceived as the best and the most just solution has to be viewed in the light of objective and subjective factors which predominate at a given politico-historical conjuncture, recognising that these factors have a habit of determining the course of events not necessarily leading to the best and just solution as perceived or wished for by the people or the leaders concerned.

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SRI LANKA: a confused uncoordinated policy

INDIAN OFFICIAL POLICY towards the Tamil question in Sri Lanka has got curioser and curioser, even if some of its proximate causes and motivations seem quite transparent. What relation does the massive and undiscriminating police action in Tamil Nadu against the Sri Lankan Tamil militant organisations, including their top leaders who have been placed under 'house arrest' under instructions from the Centre, bear to India's high policy-level effort to find a negotiated political way out of the neighbouring country's ethnic crisis? No one in the corridors of power in New Delhi, or in the Tamil Nadu Government for that matter, seems to have a clue to this riddle. Self-congratulation, or euphoria with respect to such moves bringing a political settlement nearer, is the last thing called for under the circumstances – which seem to demand urgent repair work or crisis management measures.

Whatever the intentions be behind the sensationalised crackdown on the militants, there are at least three apparent major effects at this point. In the first place, the action has clearly boosted the morale as well as the propaganda mills of the Jayawardene regime which continues to pursue its brutal military strategy against the Sri Lankan Tamils while professing commitment to a negotiated political settlement.

It is truly outrageous that Colombo has responded to whatever signal it has detected in the Tamil Nadu Government's move against the Tamil militants by unleashing a new round of atrocities – including aerial bombardment of villages in the vicinity of Jaffna – against the Tamils. The Government of India's policy must, giving up its vacillation, recognise and act against this brutal and treacherous element in the Sri Lankan state's response to the ethnic crisis. There is no question of India going along with the military course pursued by Messrs. Jayawardene, Athulathmudali & Co. – or their attempt to use the pressure of a failed, but not abandoned, military strategy to push down the negotiating level of the Tamils. But after the mess made of relations with the militant organisations and their top leaders, it would be necessary to make this policy line absolutely clear to the people of India as well as to the whole world.

The second effect relates to official Indian relations with the militant organisations. There should be no illusion that the militants have been softened in the direction of a negotiated political settlement – or indeed that the political or emotional leverage the Central and State Governments have had with them remains intact. (The analysis by a key militant leader, reported in THE HINDU underlines this point).

It is now clear that the so-called 'Operation Tiger' which should be renamed 'Operation Disarm and Humiliate' was a Tamil Nadu police initiative about which only the vaguest idea was conveyed to the Centre in advance, with the foreign policy implications brushed aside in a manner that strains credulity. How the AIADMK State Government allowed this operation – which involved a legitimate law and order component triggered by the wild actions of some sections of the militants – to be conducted as though it were merely a technical police matter divested of serious political content or implication seems to defy reasonable explanation at this juncture.

The details now available (from New Delhi as much as Madras) make it clear that the operation carried out by the Tamil Nadu police was ham-handed, humiliating to the militant leaders (who had participated in a serious political discussion with the Tamil Nadu Chief Minister only five days before this), and did visible serious damage to the larger policy interests pursued. Mr. V. Prabakaran, the leader of the key militant organisation, the LTTE, was taken to a police station for inane questioning and photographed from different angles like "a common criminal"; Mr. V. Balakumar, the EROS leader (who is known not to have been involved in the slightest problem relating to 'law and order' in the State), was, on top of the humiliation, denied elementary facilities that even a convict is legally entitled to. What 'law and order' or national policy interest could possibly have been served by such crude measures?

The Tamil Nadu Chief Minister, Mr. M. G. Ramachandran, has done well to assure the LTTE leaders whom he met on Tuesday that he would take suitable action against those responsible – presumably the police. Following the brutal outrage in Madras – in which members of one militant organisation resorted to machine-gunning on the streets of Madras and killed an Indian citizen – political and popular opinion turned against the militants and seemed to demand some kind of tough action against those responsible, so that Indian citizens did not feel threatened with weapons. But the big question that 'Operation Disarm and Humiliate' has raised sensationally, for speculative discussion the world over, is: in the light of repeated Indian official denials that arms were being passed on to the militants, or allowed to be stored on Indian soil for being taken to the Tamil areas of Sri Lanka for use against the state's military campaign, what do the revelations from the Tamil Nadu police add up to?

The third effect of the crackdown is to foster the impression that the sense of continuity with previous strands of post-1983 official Indian policy has been broken and also that there is no coherence or consistency in the policy framework. This is reflected in the clumsiness of the explanations that have been tossed between Madras and New Delhi, including in Parliament – where the Minister of State for External Affairs, Mr. K. Natwar Singh, found himself making the quite inaccurate statement that no arrests were made of the militant leaders and that they had only been advised to be available in Madras for consultation. (Actually, in a move nearly as clumsy as 'Operation Disarm and Humiliate', the Centre asked the State Government to place the top leaders of the militant organisations under 'house arrest' and, in the case of Mr. Uma Maheswaran, the PLOT leader, had an order served on him in New Delhi under the Foreigners Registration Act).

Now that the deed has been done, the emphasis must be on the repair work which needs, in the first instance, to sort out the mess and then take constructive steps to move the situation back towards a serious and coherent search for a political settlement. Mr. Jayawardene must be informed authoritatively that he should not be under any illusion that India will go along with his military strategy-led attempt to sell an inadequate package to the Tamils. This newspaper wishes to reiterate the points relating to the issues under negotiation, and the peace process, that it emphasised in its editorial published on October 28.

Measurable progress has been made in the India-aided efforts to find a political settlement, but the gap between the two sides on some major issues – above all, on the unit of devolution – remains formidable. "Indian policy must persist intelligently, but without cutting corners, in its constructive endeavour of bridging the gap . . . The key thing that Mr. Rajiv Gandhi must remember – and act upon – while meeting Mr. Jayawardene in Bangalore is that the Sri Lankan Tamils, moderates as well as militants, must be persuaded to accept a package by meaningful improvements in the package – not by anything that suggests forcing it down their throat."

Right now, the Prime Minister needs to pay priority attention to the task of getting India's Sri Lankan policy back on track.

(The HINDU, Editorial, 13.11.86)

TAMIL MILITANTS APOLOGISE FOR INCIDENT

THE Sri Lankan Tamil Militant Group Eelam People's Revolutionary Liberation Front (EPRLF), which opened fire on some local people in Madras killing one and injuring two, have apologised to the Tamil Nadu State Government and assured all co-operation for any enquiry into the incident.

EPRLF leader K. Padmanabha, in a statement, said "whatever be the circumstances, the firing by EPRLF militants was an uncivilised and undisciplined act". He also announced the expulsion of ten members involved in the firing incident.

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The Church Sings "Onward Christian Soldiers"!

TO MOST people in the North (especially Christians) who were (mis) fortunate to witness the spectacle on State Television's news spot, it was an unbelievable and unedifying sight. I refer, of course, to the ceremony held at a Roman Catholic Cathedral in Colombo last week during which the regimental colours of several battalions of the armed forces were blessed by Church leaders. The blessing of these battalions was prior to their departure to the war front where they would be rendering 'dedicated and loyal service' to protect the "people of this land" and where they would be involved in a righteous war against the Tamil 'terrorists' of the North and East. The Roman Catholic Archbishop, Rt. Rev. Nicholas Marcus Fernando, was assisted in this Service by the Anglican Bishop of Colombo, the Rt. Rev. Swithin Fernando and the President of the Methodist Conference, Rev. H. Fernando. (In) appropriately enough the processional hymn was "Onward Christian Soldiers, marching as to war. . .".

It is intriguing that in a country where Buddhism is the State religion that the Christian Church should play such a prominent role in sanctifying the efforts of the armed forces. Further, it is unbelievable that the Church should be involved in blessing the very same armed forces whose efforts at decimating the Tamil population and whose atrocities and killings have been well documented by organisations both here and abroad.

Memories are short lived or surely these Church leaders would have recalled the two Roman Catholic priests and the Methodist clergyman who were cold-bloodedly murdered by Security personnel. The irony is tragic.

Only one deduction can be made from this and that is that the Church hierarchy of the South has decided that, as in the past, it is wiser, more popular and certainly safer to toe the official line. Whilst in most countries the Church in its fight for justice finds itself at loggerheads with the powers that be, here in Sri Lanka, we have the dismaying spectacle of Church leaders falling over themselves in their eagerness to spout populist sentiment. By their actions they reveal a total lack of sensitivity to the plight of the Tamil people who are also a "people of this land". **The Tamil Times's recent editorial headline that "The Church in Sri Lanka; More Sinhala, Less Christian" seems to be unfortunately borne out by such events.**

To be a witnessing Church is not easy. It entails pain and sacrifice, especially in a society where Christianity is in the minority. That, however, is the cross that the Church, in all parts of this country, is called to bear. To witness to the truth – and to hell with the consequences. **D.C.A.**

By courtesy of The Morning Star, 17 October 1986

THE CAN(N)ON BACKFIRES

PEOPLE, even Canons, should stick to anecdotage when they are in their dotage. Unfortunately Canon Harold De Mel has chosen to ignore this prudent rule and has written a letter to the Bishop of Jaffna published on 7th October in the Ceylon Daily News.

He begins by saying that he has close connection with Tamils and drops names like the late Dr. D. T. Niles and his two sons. He also goes on to say that though he is an Anglican he has many Roman Catholic friends like the Bishop of Kandy.

According to the Anglican Canon, every man is a pingo carrier. To quote his own words, "Into the basket in front he puts all the faults of others but all his own faults and those of his own kith and kin are in the basket behind."

He wants the Bishop of Jaffna to turn the pingo right round and "peep into the basket you have behind."

The good Canon would do well to take his own advice. He refers to the killing of K. Kathiramalai and says: "The recent brutal murder of the Provincial Sarvodhya leader K. Kathiramalai compels me to write this letter to the Pontiff and religious head of the North. This is the last straw. Enough is enough! It must open the eyes of all courageous folk who are not cowards to see reality."

My, My! Where were you Canon when this very same Mr. Kathiramalai's pregnant wife, father-in-law, mother-in-law and servant were shot by the security forces in Vavuniya last year?

We never saw you rushing into print to condemn this heinous crime.

Fr. Mary Bastian, a Roman Catholic Priest in the Vankalai Parish in Mannar, and Brother Wenceslaus of the Rosarian Ashram at Tholakatty were brutally murdered by the security forces? What was your pen doing then, Canon?

Hundreds and hundreds of innocent Tamil civilians were and are being tortured and killed by the security forces. Did we hear a squeak from you Canon? Only when the Bishop of Jaffna, rightly reflecting the mood of the people here appealed to the UN to intervene and stop genocide your impotent pen becomes active.

Who is promoting racism and chauvinism, you or Bishop Deogupillai?

Stick to Avocado Pears, Canon, and stop backfiring.

(Saturday Review, 11 October 1986)

Bloody Celebrations

The Sri Lankan Army at the Jaffna Fort celebrated its 38th Anniversary with a 'big bang' – a salvo of cannon shells was fired into the heart of the town on the 10th evening and 11th morning of October.

In this firing three persons died including a one year old child who apparently died of shell-shock. The others who lost their lives were 45 year old cook, Kalimuthu Karuppiah, a cook at Hotel Subhas whose head was completely decapitated and a tri-shaw driver, Subramaniam Jayapalan (30) of Moolai. 10 others were injured. A clinic at the Jaffna General Hospital was so damaged that the treatment at the clinic has been suspended. Another shell landed at the gates of the Jaffna Secretariat. Fortunately no one was injured, as it was a non-working day. Incidentally this shell fell far beyond the 1000 metre range.

In contrast to this 'bloody celebration', those at the Army Camp at Elephant Pass treated the passengers to Passion fruit cordial and sweets at the barrier.

What a difference in attitude among the higher echelons of the Army in the North of Sri Lanka!

200 ARRESTED

In search operations conducted on 3 November by the security forces at Mahaladithivu, Kokkaddicholai, Porathivu and Padugamam in east Sri Lanka about 200 Tamil civilians were taken into custody and forced to march all the 30 miles or so from there to Batticaloa.

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THE MERGER OF NORTH AND EAST

THIS issue of the merger of the Northern and Eastern provinces of Sri Lanka has become central to the dispute, with Tamil opinion increasingly polarized in favour of the merger and Sinhalese opinion virtually unanimously opposed to it. Proposals have even been made to dismember the Eastern province to resolve the dispute. It does not appear that the long term consequences of the different opinions have been fully examined.

It is assumed that any possible solution must grant to the self-governing units adequate powers to control colonisation and maintain internal security. Anything less will be suicidal for the minorities. Given this assumption, there seems to be no significant advantages in merging the Northern and Eastern provinces. In the absence of coercion from outside, those already in the Eastern province will have a common interest in limiting colonisation from outside and in avoiding disturbing the ethnic proportions of the province. In particular, the Tamils and Muslims will be equally interested in ensuring that their population share of the province is not further reduced by unrestricted Sinhalese colonisation. If there is to be any colonisation from outside, that must be negotiated by the centre with the provincial government which must first be given the necessary authority to control colonisation and the numbers to be brought in from outside and their ethnic composition must be approved by the provincial government. Such an arrangement will in fact give both the centre and the provinces incentives to cooperate and avoid discriminatory policies.

If, on the other hand, the Northern and Eastern provinces are united, the predominant fear within the Eastern province will be domination by the Northern province. On this issue, the Sinhalese and the Muslims of the Eastern province will have common cause to resist Tamil domination. Even the Eastern province Tamils may have occasion to join hands with them on certain issues. Thus there will be communal and regional disharmony within the self-governing unit which can be exploited by those who have political interests in fomenting such unrest. In contrast, if the Eastern province remains as one unit, such unrest will be minimised and, in particular, the Tamil and Muslim populations will unite, not against the Sinhalese of the Eastern province, but against excessive colonisation from outside the province.

The most disturbing aspect of the problem is the suggestion to break up the Eastern province into Sinhalese, Tamil and Muslim sections. In the first instance, the geographical and demographic features of the Eastern province militate against such division. Such a division is not likely to be permanent as none of the units will be feasible self-governing units. Moreover, it will permit unrestricted immigration into at least the Sinhalese unit, quickly and effectively transforming the demographic composition of the province as a whole. When the Eastern province is reunified, as it surely will be when the broken up units are found to be too small and disjointed to be effectively governable, the new Eastern province will be very different to the present one in ethnic composition – perhaps with an absolute Sinhalese majority. The demographic transformation which 40

BY S. JEEVARAJ

years of agitation by Tamil and Muslim leaders has effectively slowed down, will be quickly effected in a few years of unrestricted colonisation from other provinces, albeit of certain sections of the province only. For the Tamils and Muslims of the Eastern province, nothing could be more disastrous in the long run. The inevitable heightening of communal friction will rekindle Tamil militancy and harm everyone in the province and cause damage to national unity. Ultimately, we will all be the losers.

Moreover, any tampering of provincial boundaries will inevitably threaten the interests of significant sections of the population transferred from the control of one province to another. It will therefore be wise to leave the provincial boundaries as they are. Under provincial autonomy, the Sinhalese, Tamils and Muslims will have vested interests in treating well the minorities in the regions in which they are a majority – for others of their community will be vulnerable minorities elsewhere. Any attempt to achieve ethnic segregation will not only be unworkable, but will also have the most undesirable consequences for all.

Granting provincial autonomy need not rule out colonisation from the other provinces completely. For example, the centre should be able to negotiate with the Eastern province government for some small numbers of Sinhalese, Indian Tamils, Ceylon Tamils and Muslims from other regions to be settled there, in such a manner that the development of the province is promoted without damage to communal harmony and without harming the welfare of those already living in the province.

There are both short term and long term reasons for accepting the existing Northern and Eastern provincial boundaries rather than attempting to redraw them to cover disjointed pockets of land. In the short run, any redrawing of boundaries on an ethnic basis will inevitably generate intense tensions which may prevent or sabotage any agreement. In the long run, it is desirable that the "Tamil" provinces (or regions) should not stand out as distinct from the others in such a manner as to draw their antagonism. In India, while state boundaries have been drawn broadly on a linguistic basis, each state is a contiguous region and does not include pockets of villages enclosed within other states. Such pockets, if detached from the surrounding region will not only be administratively difficult to govern, but will invite the resentment and hostility of the surrounding region, enhancing rather than overcoming the problems of the people residing in such pockets. Furthermore, if existing provincial boundaries are retained, the line up in future negotiations on devolution will not be Sinhalese versus Tamil, but the centre versus the 9 provinces. The latter will be more conducive to further devolution from the centre to the provinces.

5,832 Lankans Get Australian Visas

The Australian government has given visas to 5,832 Sri Lankans world wide during the three year period 1983 to 1986.

The Minister of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs Mr. Hurford replying to a question by a member of the Australian Parliament, Mr. Jull, in September this year gave the breakdown of the figures of Sri Lankans given visas to Australia for various purposes. During the period in question 4,457 Sri Lankans had been issued visas for family migration, 601 skilled labour, four for business purposes, six for independent reasons, nine for special eligibility and 750 on humanitarian grounds.

In reply to a question as to how many of these immigrants could be classified as belonging to the Tamil society, Sinhalese society and other sections of the Sri Lanka society, the Minister further stated that in line with the Australian government's non-discriminatory immigration policy no record is kept of ethnic, racial or religious backgrounds of persons applying for migration to Australia.

He also noted that in Colombo at the end of June 1986 (the most recent figures available) 368 applications accepted as prima facie eligible were awaiting formal assessment. A further 356 cases formally assessed were awaiting a final decision. Most of the latter group were awaiting finalisation of health and character checks, the Minister added.

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3 TAMIL STUDENTS KILLED IN FIRE-BOMB ATTACK

Police outside the burned out East Ham house where three Tamil men died in a fire-bomb attack on 14 November.

THREE Sri Lankan Tamil students were killed in a fire-bomb attack on a house in East Ham, London. The attack took place at 3.30 a.m. on 14 November as they were sleeping in the upstairs of a house in Burgess Road. The fire-bomb started a fire and the victims were burnt to death.

The dead were named as K. Karunaharan Arithimoorthy, aged 23, a student of computer science, his brother Gnanaharan, aged 25, an accountancy student at the London School of Economics, and Nirmalan Selvanayagam aged 22 also an accountancy student at the LSE.

It is learnt that a private feud was the cause of the attack and the dead students were not parties to this feud.

Five persons, all Sri Lankan Tamils, have now been charged with murder.

'DISAPPEARED' REFUGEES KILLED AS "TERRORISTS"

31 October 1986 – *Five of the refugees arrested by the security forces from the Kathirawelly refugee camp and another from Ampanthanavely refugee camp in east Sri Lanka disappeared while in custody. Their names are: Sabapathy Mahendiran, Ramalingam Rudrakumar, Kathirkamathamby Theivanayagam; Thambipillai Sivagnanasundaram: Kasinathan Kanthalingam and Sangaralingam. On 3 November the Sri Lankan TV announced that six terrorists have been shot dead, giving the names of these refugees.*

Shell Kills Pregnant Woman

12 October 1986 – *An 18 year old pregnant woman, Mrs. Selvanayakam, received a direct hit and died when gunboats belonging to the Sri Lankan navy sailing off the coast of Point Pedro in the northern Jaffna district fired shells from the sea.*

PROTEST STRIKE

Government employees of the Jaffna Secretariat and other nearby departments staged a two hour strike on 15 October protesting against the frequent firing of mortar shells from the army camp situated in the Jaffna Fort. They also demanded that the army camp should be moved from the Jaffna town. Over three hundred officers participated in the protest action.

Hindu Temple Bombed

The area surrounding the famous Murikandy Pillaiyar Temple situated 50 kilometres south of Jaffna in northern Sri Lanka was subjected to a severe air-raid last afternoon (31-10-86). Shops and houses in the vicinity including the residence of the Temple Priest were burnt and razed to the ground. Several vehicles parked opposite the temple were damaged in the aerial attack.

13 Tamils in Boat Hacked to Death

16 October 1986 – Thirteen Tamil civilians travelling on a boat to India were waylaid by naval personnel and stabbed and hacked to death. This incident occurred near Kurikattuvan off the Jaffna coast in northern Sri Lanka. Those who fell victims to this gruesome massacre had set out from Gurunagar in Jaffna during the evening of 15 October with the intention of going to India.

The naval personnel, it is reported, had forced the boat full of passengers to sail near the bridge at Kurikattuvan where the inmates were hacked and stabbed to death. The blood stained boat in which the victims travelled was seen drifting along the coast of Pungudutivu.

MILITARY TRAINING FOR 'HOME GUARDS'

Around 150 Home Guard Wardens and Sub-Wardens from the operational areas in the North and East will be the first batch to receive special military-type training commencing November 4, senior police sources said.

Approximately 150 Home Guard Wardens and Sub-Wardens will receive training at the Home Guard Training Camp in Kumbukke, under military instructors.

It was decided to train senior Home Guard personnel because they could in turn train their sub-ordinates and also because senior Home Guard personnel have to familiarise themselves with military strategy if they are to impart functional competence to their sub-ordinates.

Arrangements are being made to set up training camps for Home Guards in at least five more administrative districts.

NAVY CAPTURES FLEEING REFUGEES

29 October 1986 – A boat-load of Tamils, 20 women and 18 men who were on a boat off the coast of Mannar in north-west Sri Lanka were captured by the Navy and taken to the army camp. On the same day another boat was captured by the navy with 32 Tamils, 24 men, 6 women and 2 infants, and all of them were also taken to the army camp. The Tamils concerned were all refugees attempting to cross over to India in an effort to escape the army violence in the Mannar district.

Commandos Take Hostages

During search operations conducted on 1 November 1986 in the villages of Vellavely, Munaithivu and Kokkaddicholi in east Sri Lanka, hundreds of civilians were arrested and were detained as hostages in the newly opened police commando camp at Kokkaddicholi. Such hostages are being used by the forces for shielding them from attacks by Tamil militants during search operations.

1500 TAMILS FLEE

1 November 1986 – Following a landmine explosion at Palukamam in Batticaloa on 1 November 1986 in which three police commandos were killed, the village was attacked by bomber planes and 5 houses were destroyed and over 1,500 Tamils have fled from there to Munaithivu.

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"A Place Where We Can Feel At Home"

On Visiting a Refugee Centre in Chur (Switzerland)

CHRISTMAS 1984: In keeping with the demands of filial piety, P.C. paid a visit to the home of his parents in Jaffna to spend the holidays together with his family. Although the fourth oldest son, he now bore the main responsibility for the support of his father and mother; as his brothers were all married and had families of their own. His younger brother was also married and until recently a successful businessman. Besides owning a small store, he was also in possession of a transport van. No small sign of material affluence in a poor country. Yet his wealth also proved to be the source of his downfall. One night the van was stolen by the "boys", i.e. members of the guerilla movement, and used for some special purpose. The next morning it was parked in front of the store again – with bullet holes in the body. The young merchant reported the incident to the police and promptly came under suspicion as a sympathiser and was arrested. Altogether he was arrested three times before he decided to secretly leave the country. From that day on, P.C. took over the responsibility for the welfare of the wife and three children of his brother as well. The duty towards one's family is deeply rooted among the Tamils in Sri Lanka.

Yet the unwritten moral law of piety also has its disadvantages. During the Christmas holidays, an armoured vehicle suddenly stopped in front of the family house. Soldiers rushed into the courtyard and demanded the younger son. Upon hearing that he was not there, they took P.C. along instead. He was taken to a military base, interrogated, and tortured. Two weeks later his family was finally able to gain his release through bribery.

I have now heard and translated this story several times. P.C., who has been living in a refugee centre in Chur (Switzerland) for the past five months, has told it to school classes and in church communities. As my mother tongue is English and P.C. has just begun to learn German, I was asked to translate. Every time when he speaks about his past, new details emerge. Thus, I learned for instance, that P.C. had been a candidate for the priesthood, that he had studied at the Catholic seminary in Kandy, which is in the Sinhalese part of the country, and that for this reason he had also known many Sinhalese as fellow students and counted them as friends. So it was at least, until the riots in 1977 spread distrust and open emnity between the two ethnic groups throughout the country. At that time thousands of Tamils sought refuge in the northern part of the country. On a different occasion, I learned that P.C. had worked for a time as a social worker in a Catholic refugee camp. He mentioned this during the interrogation, and it was the reason given when he was arrested several months later for the second time. After being released again, he fled the country together with his sister-in-law and the children, who had been living in continual fear of reprisals since the flight of her husband. After a difficult and exhausting journey they finally arrived in Switzerland last year and travelled to Chur where his brother had already entered a plea for asylum.

One person's fate among thousands. Is this a "genuine" or a "non-genuine" refugee?

I never asked myself this question which is so often raised in the media, as I believe there must be another standard by which we measure a human being. On the few occasions which I served P.C. as a translator, I think I was able to sense something of the desperation which grips a person who is uncertain of his own future. The distress which one feels as a stranger in a strange land – a land whose language and culture he does not understand, but which lets him know clearly enough that he is at best tolerated, as a rule, however, deported. Fear – sorrow – homesickness. That much I was able to read in the eyes of P.C. while he spoke. Something which I could not translate, but needed no translation. I think that others who were present must have felt something similar – people who seemed to know all about refugees before ever having met one.

by Jonathan Sisson

Perhaps that was the reason why my wife and I were so deeply troubled by conflicting emotions one day when P.C. led us through the refugee centre in Loestrasse, showing us the television room where stones and beer bottles had been thrown through the windows, the old assembly hall where the Christmas celebration was planned, and the locked doors of the dining room. At first sight, the former school building makes a rather poor and sad impression in apparent correspondence with the message we hear again and again from the authorities: The standard of living of the refugees must be kept at a minimum level in order to lower the "attractiveness" of Switzerland as a land of refuge. In this one respect, at least, the asylum policy of the government seems to be a success.

It was only after P.C. had led us up into the attic that it became clear to me what refuge in a foreign country really meant to them. There beneath the roofing beams the Tamils have built a small prayer room, a "temple" as they call it, at their own initiative and own expense. In the red pastel-coloured, sweetly scented room, two altars face one another on opposite walls: The dancing Siva on one and a crucifix above the other. It is here that they come when they wish to be alone. Mornings and evenings for a moment of quiet and prayer; each to his own god. I have seldom entered a room which so plainly and simply testifies to such a deeply felt popular belief. We did not stay long. The room is not heated and the children (ours) were restless. As we went down the stairs, I thought of the aversion which Tamil refugees meet in this country and which contrasts so crassly with the tolerance for those of a different faith practised in that little room.

Later when I met P.C. in the centre on another occasion, I told him my impressions of the visit that day, how the room under the beams in the midst of such gloomy surroundings seemed to shine like a precious jewel and of the feeling of mutual respect pervading therein. He looked at me for a long moment and then said softly, "It's a place where we can feel at home."

Krishnan Appointed Rajiv's Special envoy

INDIA'S PERMANENT representative to the United Nations, N. Krishnan, who retired last week from the Foreign Service, is being appointed special envoy of the Prime Minister on Southern Africa.

Official sources said Mr Krishnan will be in charge of the Africa Fund set up at the Harare Non-Aligned Summit to assist the Southern African Frontline States affected by trade and economic blockade imposed by the racist Pretoria regime. India is Chairman of the fund.

Third World Academy Of Sciences Prize For E. C. G. Sudarshan

Prof. E. C. G. Sudarshan, Director of the Institute of Mathematical Sciences, Madras, has been awarded the 1985 physics prize by the Third World Academy of Sciences, which has its headquarters in the International Centre for Theoretical Physics in Trieste, Italy.

This is in recognition of Prof. Sudarshan's fundamental contribution to the understanding of the weak nuclear force and particularly for his part in the formulation of the "universa — A theory".

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AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL REBUTS SRI LANKA'S DENIALS

Amnesty International published in September 1986 a comprehensive (90 pages) Report containing several hundreds of cases of enforced disappearances, including cases of torture and deaths in detention, of persons taken into custody by the Sri Lankan security forces. The Minister of National Security, Mr. Lalith Athulathmudali, summarily dismissed allegations in the Report suggesting that the Sri Lankan government 'have not found any evidence to support those allegations".
Rebutting the denials of the government and pointing out that AI had received further evidence of more than 30 other cases of "disappearances" since the publication of its September 1986 report, the Secretary General of the AI, Mr. Ian Martin, has challenged the Sri Lankan government to invite the United Nations Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances to carry out investigations into the allegations.

The Hon Lalith Athulathmudali
Minister of National Security,
Ministry of Defence, Republic Building
Colombo 1, Sri Lanka

14 October 1986

Dear Minister

In interviews with the national and foreign press following the publication, on 10 September, 1986, of the Amnesty International Report *"Disappearances" in Sri Lanka*, you have expressed regret that the report did not cover all aspects of the problem of "disappearances" in the country as it failed to take account of information the government had provided to the United Nations Working Group on Disappearances; you also suggested that Amnesty International should forward complaints regarding individual cases to the Inspector General of Police. Subsequently the Chairman of the Media Centre, Department of Information, said that Amnesty International should initiate legal action in the Sri Lankan courts about "disappearances".

I will respond to these suggestions below but first I would like to express Amnesty International's grave concern about the sorrow and anguish which the families of the "disappeared" continue to experience because the fate of their missing relatives, or their whereabouts, remain, to date, uncertain. One month after the publication of the report listing data on 272 cases of "disappearances" – most of which had already been drawn to the government's attention on previous occasions – none of these cases have been clarified by the Sri Lanka Government (although Amnesty International was glad to receive confirmation from other sources that two of them, Sittu Nagalingam and Karunakaran Subramaniam, alias Vadivel, are now held in Welikada Prison). You may recall that, since August 1985, Amnesty International had repeatedly asked to receive such information. Nor has an independent impartial investigation been established into the grave allegations that in all these cases there are strong reasons to believe that members of the Sri Lanka security forces have taken these persons away, subsequently to deny any knowledge of their arrest and whereabouts. This is especially disturbing since, after the publication of the Amnesty International Report, over 30 more cases of "disappearances" have been reported to Amnesty International, details of which I will shortly be conveying to your office.

Allow me now, Your Excellency, to address the main issues which have arisen in public comments made by government officials. You may recall I have already sent a commentary on some of the points initially raised by you in radio interviews of 10 September, 1986. In view of queries our organisation continues to receive about the various government statements made in respect of "disappearances" in Sri Lanka, and in order to clarify Amnesty International's position thereon. Amnesty International plans to make the information in this letter publicly available on 23 October, 1986.

1. The evidence of "disappearances" presented in the report

Amnesty International is greatly disappointed that, despite the detailed eye-witness testimony offered in its report, some of which has also been relied upon by the Sri Lankan courts, the government has dismissed some particularly well documented reports of "disappearances" out of hand. For example, in a radio interview with the British Broadcasting Corporation of 10 September, you were asked about the "disappearances" on 17 May, 1985 of some 40 young men, most of them from Naipattimunai in the Eastern Province, alleged to have been taken away by Special Task Force personnel, ordered to dig their own graves, shot, their bodies subsequently being disposed of in secret. In response, you stated that the allegations were "utterly false" and suggested that the place where the men were allegedly killed was searched and nothing was found.

These observations, Amnesty International believes, contradict the evidence put on record and accepted by the High Court judge trying Paul Nallanayagam, the President of the Kalmunai Citizens Committee, who was recently acquitted of charges of making false statements and spreading rumours brought after he spoke to the foreign press about the incident. During his trial, several witnesses came forward to testify about the arrest of the "disappeared" by Special Task Force personnel – without their statements being challenged by the prosecution. Evidence was put on record that a police party and some of the parents had found an unidentified body and the shirt and identity card bearing the name of one of the "disappeared", Thambimuthu Packiarajah (case no. 213 in the Amnesty International Report), at the place where the alleged secret killings took place. Amnesty International is concerned that the government appears to have disregarded the serious reservations which the High Court judge trying Paul Nallanayagam expressed about the case as put by the state counsel. The judge said he doubted that the state counsel could be believed when denying that the Special Task Force had made any arrests in the area on that day.

Amnesty International respectfully recommends that the government now order a review of the substantial evidence put on record during the trial of Paul Nallanayagam about the occurrence of "disappearances" in the Eastern Province, the area from which most "disappearances" are now reported. Available information should be put before a fully independent body to impartially investigate these and other reports of "disappearances" described in Amnesty International's Report. I would like, respectfully, to reiterate that Amnesty International believes it is important that such a body be given effective powers to enforce the attendance and co-operation of witnesses, together with the means to protect them and to make on-site investigations. In accordance with Sri Lanka's obligations under relevant United Nations resolutions, the government should, Amnesty International respectfully recommends, ensure the legal accountability of security authorities responsible for human rights abuses causing people to "disappear".

2. The suggestion that Amnesty International file complaints in the local courts and with the Inspector General of Police

In a statement of 29 September, the Chairman of the Media Centre questioned the validity of the source material relied upon in the Amnesty International report, notably the value of sworn statements by relatives and others testifying to "disappearances". He suggested that Amnesty International should bring such cases to the courts in Sri Lanka, so that witnesses could be subjected to cross-examination by counsel for the government.

As described above, during the trial of Paul Nallanayagam, several witnesses came forward to testify to the arrest of persons whose "disappearance" was also described in the Amnesty International Report. Amnesty International believes it is significant that on no occasion did the counsel for the state take the opportunity to cross-examine these witnesses on the evidence they had given about the arrest of the "disappeared" and thus make an attempt to question the validity of the statements they had made that they had seen

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"disappeared" persons being taken away by the Special Task Force. Amnesty International believes that sworn evidence by eye-witnesses is a credible and important source of information about "disappearances" in Sri Lanka, apart from the other sources Amnesty International has relied upon in order to cross-check the detailed information presented in its report about the 272 cases of "disappearances".

While welcoming the statement by the Chairman of the Media Centre that the safety of witnesses filing petitions in the Sri Lankan courts will be guaranteed, Amnesty International believes that the main reason why relatives have not felt able to approach the Sri Lankan courts is the widespread fear of repercussions they have expressed if they were to make statements in court implicating members of the security forces in the arrest of persons who subsequently "disappeared". Nearly all relatives or other witnesses who contacted Amnesty International or the United Nations Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances have expressed fears of repercussions if their identities were disclosed and Amnesty International indeed believes they would face the risk of being arrested, tortured or themselves being made to "disappear".

As one example, we quote from a letter written on 10 September, 1986 by one of the relatives of the fifty-three persons whose "disappearance" from the village of Cheddikulam on 2 December, 1984 is described in the Amnesty International Report:

> *"Our several appeals to the government authorities had either been not replied [to] or they informed us that their forces did not take these men into custody. If an enquiry is held by any impartial person so that the witnesses will not be exposed to revenge by the state the whole village, men and women including children will give evidence to the effect that these men totalling over fifty-three were forcibly taken away by the army in [a] truck on 2.12.1984 from Cheddikulam."*

Furthermore, in your statement of 10 September, you suggested that Amnesty International complain to the Inspector General of Police. Amnesty International wrote on 18 September to the Inspector General of Police submitting available data about "disappearances" detailed in its report, as you suggested, and is still awaiting the Inspector General's reply. Amnesty International is aware, however, that the Inspector General of Police carries no overall responsibility for the conduct of the Army, Air Force and Special Task Force, which are most often alleged to be responsible for "disappearances" in Sri Lanka. His powers to investigate alleged offences and institute appropriate criminal proceedings only become effective once alleged offenders have been identified. However, in Amnesty International's experience with the few cases of "disappearances" where the government has announced that investigations were carried out by the police or army, the outcome of such investigations was invariably not published. Neither did such investigations by the police or army into alleged abuses by their own personnel lead to a credible clarification of "disappearances" or to the identification of the individuals allegedly responsible.

Furthermore, for various reasons as described in Section 5 of its Report, Amnesty International does not believe that existing legal remedies, such as filing **habeas corpus** petitions in the Sri Lankan courts, are an effective means to clarify what happened to the "disappeared" in Sri Lanka and provide prompt relief to the victims and their families. Amnesty International has confirmed that the Chairman of the Bar Council's Sub-Committee on the rights of suspects in police custody to obtain the services of lawyers and connected matters has found, in his Interim Report, that a "**habeas corpus** application does not serve expeditiously in obtaining of relief where the police have exceeded the 24 hour rule of detention of a person without a charge". In fact, the Interim Report suggests that Section 440 of the Code of Criminal Procedure Act "should be suitably amended to empower a judge of the High Court or a magistrate to immediately inquire into any complaint regarding the custody and/or death of any suspect . . .". The Interim Report was accepted by the Bar Council in a meeting of 26 April, 1986.

The failure of existing legal procedures to give relief to relatives searching for the "disappeared" was illustrated in the one case described in the Amnesty International Report, that of a Sinhalese SLFP member, Ananda Sunil (case no. 2 in the report), in which a **habeas corpus** petition was brought and hearings completed. (An appeal is currently being heard.) These proceedings failed to clarify what happened to Ananda Sunil after he was reportedly seen to have been arrested by the police on 27 July, 1983. In fact, the magistrate found there was evidence that witnesses originally testifying they had seen him being taken away by the Kotahena police had been subjected to intimidation in order to make them retract their earlier evidence.

In international human rights law, the Sri Lanka Government has a responsibility, emphasised by the UN General Assembly in Resolution 33/173 of December 1978, to take immediate and effective steps to clarify the whereabouts of the "disappeared". Amnesty International, therefore, respectfully urges the government to establish a fully independent and impartial machinery to investigate cases of "disappearance" and inform the relatives forthwith.

3. The suggestion that the Amnesty International Report did not cover all aspects of "disappearances"

You have also stated that Amnesty International failed in its Report to take account of information the Sri Lanka Government had provided to the UN Working Group on Disappearances.

In our letter to you of 11 September 1986, Amnesty International explained that it could not include any such information in its Report because this information had not been sent to Amnesty International by the Sri Lanka Government, and information governments supply to the UN cannot be made public unless the government authorises its release. Unfortunately Amnesty International remains unable to refer to information the Sri Lanka Government supplied to the UN Working Group with a mandate to investigate cases of "disappearance" because, despite Amnesty International's repeated requests made in urgent messages of 11, 18 and 26 September, 1986 to your office, no such information has been received from the government so far. I would greatly appreciate your co-operation in making such information available to Amnesty International at your earliest convenience.

4. The invitation to investigate alleged violations of human rights

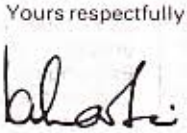
Amnesty International welcomes the invitation extended by the government spokesman of the Department of Information on 29 September inviting "anybody to investigate any matter in regard to terrorist or any other activity which refers to any violations of human rights", although Amnesty International understands from the statement you made earlier in the interview with the BBC that such an invitation may not be extended to Amnesty International.

As you know, our primary concern at present is that the families of those whose "disappearances" are described in the Amnesty International Report, should be speedily informed of the whereabouts or fate of their missing relatives. The United Nations General Assembly has expressed its deep concern about the anguish and sorrow experienced by relatives of the "disappeared" in the face of persistent failure by the authorities to acknowledge the "disappeared" are in their custody or otherwise to account for them: the international community has repeatedly emphasised that families have a right to know the fate of their relatives.

To that effect, may I respectfully request that, pending the establishment, in Sri Lanka itself, of an independent and impartial machinery to carry out such investigations, the government considers inviting the UN Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances to visit Sri Lanka. The Working Group has been invited by a number of governments of countries in which "disappearances" have been reported. Such an invitation would be an important response to the desire expressed by the international community through the United Nations that governments fully co-operate with the UN Group and could, moreover, substantially alleviate the sorrows of the families who, till now, have searched in vain for their relatives who have "disappeared".

Minister, I apologise for writing to you at such length. I thought, however, that the issues which have been raised in recent weeks in connection with "disappearances" in Sri Lanka required a substantial response. I hope you will find the suggestions made by Amnesty International to be a positive contribution towards the ongoing debate in Sri Lanka about how human rights can be effectively protected, of which the recent government statements are clear evidence. Amnesty International greatly appreciates that this debate continues even in the difficult circumstances prevailing in Sri Lanka at present.

Yours respectfully and sincerely



Ian Martin
Secretary General

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FOUR KILLED AND 32 INJURED IN SHELL-FIRE

29 October 1986 – One of the many shells fired towards the Jaffna General Hospital fell at the main entrance to the Hospital last noon killing 4 civilians and seriously injuring 32, including Policemen and Hospital employees.

It was a strange coincidence that Army shells fell at the entrance of the Hospital just when a meeting considering the measures and steps for the prevention of continued firing of shells on the same institution was in progress.

Providentially, the missile deviated from its track by striking against telephone wires and thus a major catastrophe was avoided as otherwise it would have hit the Main Office or the adjacent Women's Ward resulting in heavy casualties. Moreover, had the shells been fired minutes earlier, it would have taken a heavy toll of lives as friends and relatives waited at the entrance in large numbers for the bell.

Jaffna's Grand-Bazaar was a hive of activity at the time with crowds of 'Deevali' shoppers in anticipation of the Hindu Festival on 1st November.

19-year old T. Jegatheeswaran, an Engineering Student, whilst entering the Hospital on his motor cycle to see his ailing uncle was killed on the spot. Three others on similar missions were also killed in the explosion.

A Police Sergeant and 2 Constables on their way to the Jaffna Police Station were severely injured. Several of the injured had come to visit patients in the hospital.

ARMY ON KILLING SPREE

11 November 1986 – *Twenty Tamils who had taken refuge in-house at Pullunudai were dragged out by the security forces, lined-up and shot dead. The two women among them were initially separated, taken away and raped and later found shot dead. Among the dead were members of 3 families and included 5 women and 10 children. 25 more Tamil civilians taken away at the same time by the security forces have gone 'missing'. It is believed they too have been killed.*

BOMBING RESUMES

11 November 1986 – Many towns and villages in Vadamarachchi, Jaffna in northern Sri Lanka were bombed from attack aircraft and strafed from helicopter gunships. Six civilians were killed and 42 were injured. The injured were taken to the Jaffna General Hospital.

Wards numbers 1 and 2 and the canteen at the Manthikai Hospital were severely damaged as a result of the bombing.

Citizens Committee Calls For End To Bombing

In a memorandum addressed to President Jayawardene, the Batticaloa-Amparai Citizens Committee has said that civilian areas in the Batticaloa district have been subjected to aerial bombing and that innocent civilians have lost their homes and become refugees. The Committee has appealed to stop bombing of civilian areas.

AERIAL ATTACK IN BATTICALOA

Periya-Porativu in the Batticaloa District in eastern Sri Lanka was subjected to a severe aerial attack last morning (2-11-86) – bombing and mortar shell firing – by planes and helicopters. 20 houses were damaged and several civilians are feared killed in the attack. More than a thousand have been rendered homeless.

At the same time, about 60 Tamil employees in Sea Street, Colombo who returned to their native Periya-Porativu to attend a religious festival were arrested on arrival and have been detained as hostages in the temporary Army Camps in Kokaddicholai and Paduwankarai which areas are to be cordoned off and searched shortly by the Forces.

VARSITY STUDENT KIDNAPPED

8 November 1986 – Vaseetharan, an undergraduate from the University of Jaffna in northern Sri Lanka was kidnapped by a group of armed men reportedly belonging to a Tamil militant group. At the time of his kidnapping, Vaseetharan was in a hostel of the University. The Vice Chancellor of the University, the Jaffna Mothers Front and Citizens Committee and several other organisations have appealed for the victim's release. Students of the University will undertake a fast from 18 November appealing for his release.

Army Uses 'Human Shield'

15 November 1986 – *The army rounded up nearly 200 Tamil civilians and used them as a 'Human Shield' in the course of a search operation in Dharmapuram in the Kilinochchi area in northern Sri Lanka. One Nadarajah Mahendran who ran in fear was shot dead by the army. Six persons were taken into custody in the operation.*

It may be recalled that in the Batticaloa district too, the security forces have used 'human shields' in their search and arrest operations.

Refugee Boat Sunk

6 November 1986 – 17 bodies of Tamils have been found washed ashore at the Thalaimannar coast in north west Sri Lanka. On 7 November the Sri Lankan media reported them to be bodies of Tamil refugees who were drowned when their boat capsized while returning from India. But the previous report was that 22 men and 3 women were intercepted by the navy off Vankalai. However it is reported that according to a survivor now being treated in hospital, a boat carrying a group of people fleeing to India as refugees were sunk by the navy.

Telephone Exchange Blasted

28 October 1986 – A group of armed men arrived at the Telecommunications Exchange in Trincomalee in north Sri Lanka, tied up the security guards who were on duty and placed explosives and detonated them resulting in a massive explosion which severely damaged the telecommunication exchange.

The Late

DR. K. ARUMUGAM

It is with deep regret the Sri Lankan community in Britain and the world over learnt of the passing away so suddenly of Dr. K. Arumugam, renowned academic and 'friend, philosopher and guide' to successive generations of students.

His name was synonymous with the City University to most Sri Lankans. He was a father figure and mentor to young people and a willing adviser to their anxious parents. In his dealings with the humblest person in society as with professional and political leaders with whom he conferred on many important questions, he maintained a sense of humour and affability. A man with the courage of his convictions, his premature departure will be mourned by generations of his students, both in Peradeniya and in London. Many of them today lead the struggle against injustice and intolerance both in the north and in the south of Sri Lanka.

His clarity of thought and precise expression have often accelerated and smoothed decision-making in the many organisations he helped to create and others in which he actively participated in the defence and welfare of his people. He was a man without prejudice or rancour who risked his own health for the benefit of his community and country. Those of us who worked closely with him will not only miss him as a friend but also a source of strength and wisdom for the accomplishment of the difficult tasks that confront us in our fight for justice and equality.

Aru, our dear friend, all of us will miss you immensely. So will your devoted wife and daughter, to whom we extend our profound sympathy and support.

Saudi Arabia **Dr. R. Sri-Pathmanathan**
30th October 1986

Two Deported Youths Remanded

TWO TAMIL YOUTHS who were deported from Australia and France were remanded to fiscal custody on Tuesday by Fort Magistrate, Quintus Perera pending investigation by the CID as to their bona fides.

Court was informed by the CID that suspect T. Wesley Dominique was deported from Australia and suspect Kandiah Pareendran from France. They were arrested on arrival at the Katunayake Airport.

CID moved that the suspects be remanded pending reports on them from police in Vavuniya, Jaffna and Mannar.

The Magistrate allowed the application, and remanded the suspects to fiscal custody till October 28.

(From The Island, 24.11.86)

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Dr. K. ARUMUGAM

The beaming smile visible miles away is no more.
The benevolent face that greeted friends, kinsmen and strangers alike with equal warmth is no more.
The ringing voice that exuded enthusiasm and genuine interest and which was always full of good advice is no more.
Aru was a man who saw only goodness or the potential for it in everyone whom he came across.
This lack of malice and the lack of any internal conflicts resulted in the glow he radiated.
All that is gone now.
A light has indeed gone out of our lives.

Born in Thirunelveli village, in the now strife-torn Jaffna peninsula of Sri Lanka, of none too prosperous parents, Aru, by the full exercise and application of the intellectual power he was endowed with, rose to stride the academic institutions the world over. Sri Lanka's loss became the City University's and the world's gain.

His research studies into water resources, especially the impact of large scale irrigation projects, took him all over the world. The friends and acquaintances he gathered along the way remain loyal and affectionate towards him. Many students from different countries remain thankful to him for his guidance in their post-graduate work.

Having studied, in many countries of the world, the total impact of all the prestigious large scale dam and irrigation projects, which are always dear to the hearts of the politicians, Aru was to a certain extent disenchanted by the diminishing agricultural returns and gradual environmental and social disasters that eventually followed in the wake of such projects.

He became an ardent supporter of low technology projects for the developing countries. In Sri Lanka too, he had travelled to almost every nook and corner.

His contact with all the various social groups in that island and his contact with the different communities around the world, confirmed him in his conviction – a conviction that had always been present since his student days – that he should play whatever part he could, irrespective of however small or big it turns out to be, to facilitate the development of an appropriate socio-economic order for the human society all over the world.

His dedication was only to such a system of political and socio-economic structure that would benefit the humble peasant and the ordinary man as much as the intellectually endowed and the financially strong.

* * * *

Undoubtedly it is hard on the immediate family, other relatives and friends YOU have left behind; but it must be of satisfaction to you, ARU, that your last task was one in the service of your community and your last moments were within the hallowed walls of a temple of learning.

You saw your service to humanity as part of your duty to your community and the service to your community as part of your duty to humanity. There was no conflict between the two. You brought together many members of our community and instilled into us the idea that developing the land is the first step in nurturing the nation.

In a relatively peaceful time in Sri Lanka, in the year 1974, you caused in UK the creation of an appropriate organisational structure, among the expatriate Sri Lankan Tamils, dedicated to developing the land – at a time when the need for voluntary organisations to undertake such a task was not evident to everyone.

In 1977, after a man-made disaster in Sri Lanka, you found yourself at the helm of an unruly vessel, buffetted by emotional tides and therefore listing and swaying in all directions. You guided it wisely.

In parallel, you instilled enthusiasm and dedication into many a youngster of our community – an enthusiasm that made them and continues to make them endure many hardships.

You disliked exploitation of one man by another. Your ambition was to see our community on par with all other communities,

- free of all oppression
- free to be able to stretch its arms and legs, throw back its head and sing and dance in joy
- free to develop and mature

not a master of anyone, nor a slave of anyone.

On this errand you trundled the streets of Delhi in the scorching heat and endured the blowing sand of Deccan. You meekly hung around in the ante-rooms of men whose only credentials were that they had some political influence, to explain to them the distress of our community.

You also walked the scented paths of supreme power and thankfully found sympathy at the highest levels.

Your dedication to the nationhood of our community;

- to the rehabilitation of the displaced;
- to the welfare of the repatriates, deceptively sent from the lush tea estates of Sri Lanka to languish in the barren regions of India where they are undergoing severe hardships;
- to continuing research into the socio-economic conditions affecting life; and
- to revolution in ideas – was boundless.

Your intention was not to be content with long distance advice from a far away place but to live among the suffering young men and women of our community; to share their suffering and be in a better position to guide them.

Our community has been traumatically deprived of that privilege.
The searing laceration will take ages to heal.
You have achieved liberation of a sort. We salute you.
Even from a non-physical state, you will continue to guide us.

R. Thaya Paran

BOOK REVIEW

TAMIL VALKKAI VARALARRU ILAKKIYAM: by Dr. S. Sivakami The International Institute of Tamil Studies, Taramani, Madras-600113. Rs. 35.

DR. S. SIVAKAMI has taken considerable pains to produce this well-documented and exhaustive work on Tamil Biography.

In the introductory portion, she clearly brings out the difference between history and biography on one hand and biography and autobiography on the other.

Even with regard to biography, the author points out the distinction between the one written by a person who had personal knowledge of the subject-matter of his work and the other written by a biographist on the basis of recorded materials as to what the subject-matter of the work did when he lived and what others had said and written about the carer and achievements, since the biographist himself comes on the scene much later.

The attempt of the author to find biographical aspects or parts even in Old Testament dealing with Kings and Prophets and in Purananooru where the poets and bards had sung about the valour, heroic exploits, compassion, generosity, literary ptronage of chieftains and rulers, deserves special mention and is worthy of appreciation.

As a matter of fact a considerable portion of the book gives an exhaustive list of what the author considers to be biographical works in Tamil language. One may feel that a more discriminating approach could have been adopted in preparing the list; yet the exhaustive list containing any work approaching a biography, or part of a biography, will be useful as a source material for further examination, investigation and research.

In whatever way one may look at the work, the book under review is a commendable one, showing a wealth of learning, untiring investigation, an exemplary desire to be as exhaustive as possible and an emulation-worthy enthusiasm, to do justice to the task undertaken and therefore the Author deserves every congratulation and her work is certain to be useful for the pursuit of further studies in the field of biography in Tamil.

M.M.I.

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SRI LANKA: A Review Of The Developments Since July 1983

THE HUMAN RIGHTS FACTOR IN THE ETHNIC CONFLICT

"Is is too late for an attempt to evolve an inter-communal approach to the language question and the related matters of education and employment? It would be a pity if the Sri Lankan leadership wait for bombs to explode and for the Prisons to fill up again, before conceding that the Tamils need a re-assurance that they have a place in the future of the Island."

Walter Schwarz in "The Tamils of Sri Lanka" Minority Groups Publication, London Report No. 25 of September 1975.

by Prof. K. Sivathamby
(University of Jaffna, Sri Lanka)

How prophetic has been this statement made just 11 years ago? Sri Lanka is now seen and described as a paradise disturbed, almost lost, never to regain its former splendour.

This Seminar has its focus of attention on the human rights issues in situations of ethnic conflict; even so, it cannot preclude analysis of contingent factors such as:–

(a) The nature of the ethnic or racial or religious conflict;
(b) The goals and interests of the parties;
(c) Human rights violations as causes of confrontation;
(d) The strategies of the parties to the conflict;
(e) The dynamics of the conflict itself;
(f) The impact on the methods of confrontation and of the means used in the conflict;
(g) Nature and causes of foreign involvement;
(h) Efforts at major settlement; and
(i) Human rights requirements to the content of a settlement.

In this context, any contribution on Sri Lanka will have to neccessarily deal with how the violation of human rights actually constitutes the core of the problem and how such violations have determined the attitudes and actions of the affected party, namely the Tamils, towards not only the State but also towards the character of the political solution itself.

Such a discussion calls for, at the outset, a statement on the current situation of the conflict.

I

While discussing the ethnic conflagrations in Sri Lanka it has become within the last 3 years, almost a convention, to refer to the 1983 riots as the most decisive and epoch-making event in the history of the ethnic struggle. With perhaps a heavy consciousness of the grim tragedies that took place in 1983, there has virtually been a lexical exhaustion to describe it – terms like "holocaust" and "pogrom" have very often been used.

1983, A LANDMARK

The post-1983 events showed that it was not so much of a holocaust or a deluge. More things were yet to come; it was a water-shed, a turning-point. Looking back at the July 1983 riots in clinical historical terms, its significance lies in that it was the year in which the Tamils in Sri Lanka learnt conclusively that they cannot lay claim to any area as their unquestionably legitimate areas of residence except those they have been used to describing as their 'traditional homelands'; they had to abandon their residences in other areas and seek refuge in the 'traditional' areas in large numbers. **1983 therefore constitutes a landmark in the history of the ethnic conflict in establishing the fact that it was to the North and East that the Sri Lankan Tamils could fall back.** This would even apply to the plantation Tamils, for not only in 1983, but even in mid and late seventies, the displaced and the superfluous in the plantation area had to seek shelter in the northern and eastern districts.

The history of the post-1983 phase is, from the Tamil point of view, also the history of their attempt to hold on to those areas with political sanction, and constitutional acceptance.

It would therefore be advisable to delineate first, the current situation and see how it fits into the logic of events of the post-1983 period.

II

The current situation could be summarised thus:

At the political level, negotiations are being conducted for a political situation through the good offices of India. It is understood that the anxiety on the part of India to solve this problem has become the most important motivating factor in the continuity and effectiveness of the negotiations. It is generally accepted now that the Tamil United Liberation Front, the open political force that used to represent the Tamils in Parliament and is now a proscribed Party, is no more representative enough to pledge the Tamils to any settlement that has got to be implemented at the mass level. It is now made clear that without the participation and sanction of the militants, no implementation of any agreement is possible.

As for the militants' situation, the E.N.L.F. [Eelam National Liberation Front] which was the umbrella organisation for all the major militant groups, is no more in force, and it is the L.T.T.E. [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] led by Prabhakaran which is the major force, with E.R.O.S. [Eelam Revolutionary Organisation] and E.P.R.L.F. [Eelam People's Revolutionary Liberation Front] coming next.

FORGING OF TIES

At the military level, negotiations seem to have no relevance at all. While talks and negotiations for talks are going on, the Army attacks have been severe in the East, especially Trincomalee and Batticaloa, and air attacks all over the North and East have now become frequent phenomena. However, it is generally agreed that the militants have now grown into an important military force, so much so that, within the Jaffna Peninsula, they have been able to contain the Army without allowing it to move freely outside its barracks. Outside the Peninsula, the movements of the army have been restrained. There have been instances of open battles between the army and the militants in certain areas in North and East. An important feature of the current situation is that due to the activities of the armed forces, especially the attack on civilians and air attacks, there has been a forging of ties between the people at large and the militants, for it is the militants with their sentry-system and with return-attacks who save the people from military attacks. This is creating a new and interesting situation in the relationship between the militants and the people. With the war becoming a total one, affiliations of the people are no more in doubt.

Human rights violations continue to increase with large numbers of Tamil youths, especially from the eastern part, being sent to the Detention Camps in Sinhala areas. The number of disappearances of Tamil people after arrests is very high in the East. The problem of the violation of human rights is no more confined to the Tamils alone. Some Sinhala youth too have been arrested. There had been a spate of such arrests in recent times, a number of them allegedly suspected to be of marxist persuasion have been questioned and quite a number of activists have been detained. There is an uneasy silence about these arrests in the Sinhala areas. The State media do not refer to them.

In reviewing the current situation, the most important feature one has to highlight is the character of the discussion on the nature of the settlement. It is said that the maximum the government could give is Provincial Councils only. The minimum Tamil demand is for a bringing together of all traditional Tamil-speaking regions of Sri Lanka, namely the North and East. It has already been expressed on the moderate Tamil side that the quantum of devolution should have relevance to the real needs of the Tamils, who have borne with a new found political fortitude all the losses of life and the disruption.

POSITION OF MUSLIMS

This, of course, has also led to the discussion on the constitutional position o Muslims in the country – whether they should have a separate terrain for them in the Amparai district or not. This also raises an equally-important question about the place of the Muslim in the Tamil-speaking areas, for there are, besides the southern

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part of the Eastern Province, other areas like Mannar where Muslims live in substantial numbers. As things stand (September, October 1986) there seems to be no chance of a major breakthrough. With the distinct possibility now of Sri Lanka becoming eligible to receive American assistance against "terrorism", things can only worsen.

III

This situation has arisen out of the impact of the events that have taken place since 1983, the date by which the Tamils had to confine themselves politically to the northern and eastern parts of the country.

The 1980s mark the beginnings of an increasing involvement of militant youth organisations in obtaining a political solution to the plight of the Tamils. As had been shown earlier[1] the militants came into the mainstream of political life due to the collapse of the parliamentary system, especially the collapse of faith in the electoral system – first in 1981 there was mass-scale emasculation of the electoral process in the Elections for the District Development Councils which the TULF had accepted as politically enough at that time.

In fact, it has been claimed that the 1983 riots were a reprisal to the killing of 13 soldiers in Jaffna by the militants[2] and understandably enough the state began combing-out operations in the north and east immediately after the 1983 riots. Looking back, it is now becoming increasingly clear that there was a two-fold attack by the government made in these areas (a) in relation to getting rid of the militants; and (b) directed towards the problem of the Sinhala settlers in the North and East.

GOVERNMENT'S EFFORTS

The following constitutes some of the important efforts undertaken by the state to gain full control over the Tamil areas:

(1) The entire Sri Lankan Tamil region kept under continuous night-curfew, with intermittent day and night curfews, sometimes on for 61 hours at a stretch. The districts affected by these were Jaffna, Kilinochchi, Mannar, Vavuniya, Mullaitivu, Trincomalee, Batticaloa and the A.G.A.'s Divisions of Thirukovil and Akkaraipattu. This went on from late 1984 to June 1985.

(2) Full surveillance of Tamils in the non-Tamil areas, especially in Colombo and the up-country.

(3) Declaration of Security Zones and Prohibited Zones. On 29.11.84 Jaffna and Kilinochchi were declared Security Zone districts. People could not enter or leave the Zones without informing the Government. Following were some of the regulations imposed in the Jaffna district:-

(a) Ban on all private motor vehicles and even pedal cycles. The only public transport available was the bus service and that too on certain routes only.

(b) Rationing of fuel, but fuel was not brought into the zone.

(c) Legal ban on the flow and direction of traffic from within the area. No vehicles could enter the Jaffna town after 8.30 a.m.

(4) The entire prohibited Zone covered the littoral area within a limit of 100 metres landwards and 5 miles seawards from Mullaitivu to Mannar along the north-eastern, northern and western coast. This meant that fishing, which was the main economic activity in this region, ceased immediately. There was even the legal necessity to obtain a certificate of residence.

Because of the security zone and the prohibited zone regulations, there arose an acute food and fuel shortage and virtually a breakdown in the health services. The agrarian sector too suffered. Equally significant is the disruption of the school system where some of the important schools in the areas had to be closed.

In the non-peninsula regions of the North, and the East the military undertook the following operations:-

(1) Driving the Tamil villagers from their traditional habitation, as for instance Thennamaravady in the east coast.

(2) Mass evacuation of entire Tamil villages in the heartlands of Tamil areas of Vavuniya and Mullaitivu, to enable Sinhala settlers there to continue. The villages of Kokilai, Nayaru and Kumulamunai in the Mullaitivu districts were affected in this manner. The number of such refugees exceeded 20,000 at the end of 1984.

"CORDON-AND-SEARCH ARRESTS"

One of the most oppressive actions undertaken by the army and continued even now is the 'Cordon-and-search arrests' which, it was told, was undertaken to bring to book the militant youths who are at large. These operations led to mass indiscriminate arrests of youths between the ages of 17 and 25; the operation was done in such a manner that quite often males from 14 to 35 were also arrested. Most of these arrested youth were sent to Sinhala areas for detention, and thus arose the Boosa Camp.

Added to all these measures of direct oppression there was during this time open statements made by Ministers about maintaining population levels in all parts of the country at or near the national ratio of the ethnic groups. There was also the miltarisation of the Sinhala settlers who were given basic military training and units of home guards were formed in the border areas.

A highly specialised Special Task Force was established in 1984 to take charge of the security operations in the eastern province. This unit, combining within it the severities of both the army and the police, has been accused of being responsible for the 'disappearances' of many Tamil detenus.

There was unrelenting continuity of these activities and there occurred in late-1984 and mid-1985 two events which changed the character of the ethnic violence.

In December 1984, the Dollar and Kent Farms in the Mullaitivi District were attacked by the militants and the Sinhala "peasant settlers" there were made to leave. There has been an argument over the character of these settlements, for it is told that in August 1984, these two farms which were originally Tamil owned were taken over for the Prisons Department for rehabilitation of prisoners. It was also later brought out that, other than prisoners to be rehabilitated, there were also some dry-zone settlers. The militants' position was that these were places where trained Sinhala ex-convicts were being settled to eject the Tamil villagers of the area. This was the heartland of the Tamil Vanni.

The other major event was the incident at Anuradhapura. The Sri Lankan Ambassador to U.N. the Sub-commission on the Prevention of discrimination and protection of minorities, described the event thus:-

> *"A more serious incident took place on May 14th when Tamil terrorists disguised as Security Forces entered the Sacred City of Anuradhapura, hallowed by Buddhists all the world over, and opened fire at random on crowds of unsuspecting civilians including a group of pilgrims engaged in religious worship, killing over a hundred people – men, women and children"*

It was common knowledge at that time that this was the response to the killing of about 70 Tamil civilians at Valvettiturai arrested after cordon and search arrests and huddled up in a small community centre room and blasted.

GAME OF REPRISALS

From this time onwards, the game of reprisals has been taking a severe toll. During the early part of 1985, hundreds of unarmed civilians were reported killed in retaliation for attacks on Security Force personnel or Sinhala civilians. "An estimated 75 Tamil civilians were killed on 9.5.85 in Valvettiturai allegedly in retaliation for the killing of an Army Major. 48 passengers on a ferry boat from Delft were killed allegedly by Navy personnel on 15.5.85 in retaliation for the killing of 146 Sinhala civilians including women and children by armed Tamil groups the previous day; and over a hundred civilians were killed in and around Vavuniya in retaliation for a landmine explosion at the Vavuniya Army Camp on 16th August."

Events of this type brought the ethnic violence and its post-1983 manifestations to the door-step of every home in Sri Lanka, and understandably there was some political pressure for a settlement.

With India acting as mediator, there was a ceasefire arranged between the militants' organisation and the Sri Lankan Government. Even though the terms of the ceasefire were never officially announced by the Sri Lankan Government, it had taken action to restrict the Army to barracks, to lift the curfew which was in force in districts in the north of Sri Lanka and to lift restrictions on fishermen. There was also the release of some detenues. According to the terms of the ceasefire published in India it was to consist of four phases during which negotiatons would lead to political settlement and a cessation of hostilities.

(Statement by Ambassador Jayantha Dhanapala of Sri Lanka on the subject of Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, 38th Session, August 26, 1985, Geneva).

(Amnesty International Report on "Sri Lanka – some recent reports on extra-judicial killings" – September 1985 to March 1986)

To be continued

> *"The armed struggle was forced on us by the Government. And if they want us to give it up now, the ball is in their court."*
>
> **Nelson Mandela**

(1) Sivathamby K – Sri Lankan Tamil situation 1977–83 Paper read at a Joint Seminar on the Open Economy and its effects, at the S.S.A. Colombo 1983, Lanka Guardian December 1983 and January 1984.

(2) It is now generally accepted that it was more a provocation than a cause.

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Effects of Conflict on Economy in Northern Sri Lanka

This is the second part of the study undertaken by Dr. Paul Seabright in Northern Sri Lanka during the latter half of 1985. The third instalment will appear in the December issue. Dr. Seabright is presently attached to Churchill College, Cambridge.

(Continued from last issue)

Agriculture: The Jaffna peninsula is a dryland region with no rivers and poor drainage. Nevertheless it has a sophisticated dryland agriculture with most land irrigated by kerosene of diesel pumpsets, and most ploughing operations performed mechanically, with either tractors or (more commonly) power tillers. Draught cattle are very few. Shortages of fuel have therefore had a severe effect upon cultivation of principal crops: last year's paddy production for the Maha (winter) season was approximately 60 per cent of normal, and rice imports to the peninsula began in October 1985 instead of as usual, in December. Estimated area under paddy for the present Maha season is 10,800 hectares, a mere 34 per cent of the area sown two years ago. Yields per hectare are likely to be reduced by shortages of fertiliser and other inputs (the fertiliser supply situation has eased due to some government consignments by sea, but it is unlikely that farmers will have had access to fertiliser in sufficient time). They will also be affected by heavy flooding in Jaffna during November 1985, the extent of the damage from which has yet to be assessed. The repercussions for overall rice supply in the country will be discussed below.

In the minor food crop sector, both acreages and yields have been correspondingly hit. The CBRE indicates that production of red onions in Sri Lanka (nearly all produced in Jaffna) was in 1984 at only 12.2 per cent of its 1983 level, due to a 67.8 per cent fall in area sown and a 60 per cent fall in yield. National production of potatoes was just over half that in 1983, under cultivation in Jaffna district having fallen by about 80 per cent. National production of manioc, red chillies and groundnut, other principal Jaffna crops, also recorded large falls in 1984, though it should be emphasised that other factors are doubtless at work here besides disturbances in the North, and that in any case statistics for this sector are of poor reliability. In 1985 these trends can only have worsened, with unavailability of kerosene during the Jaffna curfew and deterioration of security in other areas of the North and East. The ceasefire has led to a small resurgence of cultivation of minor crops in Jaffna itself, but not on any significant scale, and the marketing difficulties experienced this year may well discourage optimism even if direct constraints on production have been eased. Notably it is among the perennial crops (grapes, mangoes, coconuts), whose cultivators paid most for scarce irrigation fuel and resisted acreage reductions, that the greatest fall in producer prices has occurred this year, and the lesson has not been lost on other cultivators. "We used to pray for a good harvest", reported one farmer. "Now we have to pray that we can get it to market too."

As a result of these developments, real incomes in the agricultural sector have been seriously reduced. I have no way to estimate the size of this effect on farmers, but about earnings of agricultural labourers there is better information. The Rural Labourers' Union, an association of some 2,000 landless labourers (and a few small tenant farmers), reports a fall in average monthly earnings of some 60 to 70 per cent since before the summer of 1983. Days of work per month are reported down to between ten and fifteen on average from 25 to 30 before; the nominal daily wage has not, however, been reduced but remains at its previous level of Rs 40 per day for men and Rs 25 for women. But there has been a fall in incidence of contract labour, which prior to 1983 was a widespread phenomenon, earning men between Rs 50 and Rs 75 per day. Contractual arrangements, which *inter alia* protect employers against the risk of labour shortage at the times of crucial operations, have apparently become superfluous to them after the emergence of a labour surplus. This surplus has not, however, been severe enough to change the force of customary practice in setting the daily nominal wage (the rise in the open-market rice price has of course meant some real wage decline).

Until recently the labour surplus has been due entirely to a fall in demand, but inflows of refugees from Vavuniya and the Eastern province in recent months (unlike the post-1983 influx which consisted primarily of those engaged in urban occupations) may add to labour supply unless resettlement is possible at an early date. It is symptomatic of the pervasiveness of economic disruption in conditions of physical insecurity that while only two members of the RLU are reported to have been killed by the security forces, the remainder of the membership has seen its real earnings so heavily reduced. While there may be some exaggeration in the figures reported to me, their general level is certainly not implausible in the light of what is known about the decline in cultivation area.

In the face of these changes, farmers and labourers have few resources to fall back upon. New bank credit has effectively ceased in Jaffna, and banks have ceased making cash payments (due to the high incidence of bank robberies in 1983 and 1984). Informal credit markets do not appear to have compensated for this: despite a rise in reported 'normal' interest rates from 3 per cent per month to 5 per cent per month, amounts of credit advanced are said to have declined.

This is of course an impressionistic judgment, but it accords with what one might expect given the diminished availability of each and the unpredictability of the borrower risks involved. If accurate, such a finding contrasts with the common tendency of informal credit markets to increase the volume of credit at lean times of the agricultural year, a discrepancy that prompts the following hypothesis about the discontinuity between 'normal' and 'abnormal' conditions: (a) in 'normal' times when borrower risk is relatively well known to the lender, credit volume is demand-determined along a rising supply curve, with higher demand raising both volume and interest rates (the latter typically in spite of lower opportunity costs to the lender in the lean season, and due no doubt to a monopoly position as well as to some increase in default risk); (b) in 'abnormal' times when risks to borrowers and lenders are either unusually high or unpredictable or both, higher demand in the informal sector leads to higher interest rates, but the supply curve bends backwards and credit rationing ensues. In the latter cases the normal informational advantages possessed by informal over formal sector lenders tend to disappear. More mundanely, it may also be true that in conditions of insecurity, private money-lending, as an activity combining high visibility with often low popular goodwill, is no longer so attractive to potential leaders.

I have no estimates of the incidence of land mortgage or distress sale, but anecdotal information suggests the land market to be very stagnant. Land can function as a security in distress only when adverse circumstances strike the economy unevenly, leaving certain groups in a position to demand the land that others need to sell; in conditions such as those in Jaffna where the agricultural economy has suffered very widespread stress, land is of little use. The cases of distress land transfer reported to me concern mortgage contracts made in the past, of which the repayment conditions have become suddenly burdensome due to recent circumstances, such as a family's loss of breadwinner. Concerning livestock, however, the rise in price of mutton and chicken (both mainly local products) suggests that increased domestic consumption and sale in 1984 (motivated both by family needs and by the shortage of fodder and grain for consumption) may have resulted in a reduction in the current stock. When economic distress is widely enough diffused (and economic risks sufficiently closely correlated), assets that can be costlessly consumed are more useful than those that have to be transferred or that yield consumption benefits only at a cost.

Industry and Public Services

It is difficult to find useful aggregate information on industrial production in individual districts of Sri Lanka, and Jaffna is no exception. It is in any case not one of the country's significant industrial areas, and the effect of the troubles on its industry must be guessed from examples. The cement plant at Kankesanthurai, which in 1982 produced 39 per cent of the country's output, is now reported running at 10 per cent capacity and a large rise in investment by its parent corporation in 1984 suggests that it intends to shift its capacity elsewhere. A large Sigma Pump manufacturing plant has closed, and its premises are now occupied by the security forces. There have been many closures of small engineering concerns, including workshops and garages, due to a combination of high costs (especially of fuel), shortage of skilled labour (many technicians and engineers have joined the migration abroad) and low demand. Construction is virtually at a halt in the housing sector, since houses are usually the first target for security forces reprisals. In the public sector, roadworks are at 40 per cent of normal after a year and a half (January 1984 to July 1985) of no roadworks at all, except some undertaken by militant organisations using pilfered supplies. Contractors have abandoned work on a town water supply system in Point Pedro. In the words of a public servant, "there is no investment, nothing, anywhere".

Of the major public services, transport is the one on which the effects of the disturbances are most visible in published statistics. CBRE reports that in 1984, as a result of security difficulties in operating bus services, "Northern and Eastern Regional Transport Boards (RTBs) each lost approximately 40 per cent of the scheduled kilometrage, while the North Central RTB lost around 30 per cent". The 1985 performance will certainly have deteriorated. Similarly, total passenger kilometrage on Sri Lanka Railways in 1984 was 27 per cent down on its 1982 level.

Continued opposite

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"THE CEYLONESE PEOPLE IN EXILE"

Living here in exile, amidst nearly 500,000 of our island's workers who have been driven out of their Island home by various pacts and agreements and their now considerable natural increase, has led to some of their despair and alienation as exiles, having rubbed off on those of us who have taken the trouble to make contact with them and study their situation to the extent possible. Like most of us, most of them too arrived here much against their will and definitely against their better judgement.

Like most of us, most of them too had known little or nothing of this country or its people and like most of us, most of them too spoke a language that had evolved its own individuality and which would consequently mark them out as foreigners. Like us, most of them found to their dismay, that the citizenship they had fought for in their Island home but had never been recognised or accepted by the majority in their own homeland, was now forced upon them making them alien 'Ceylon Refugees' in this country where they had hoped to find acceptance and welcome as its own children returning from a lengthy sojourn in foreign lands. Thus they have for over one and a half decades remained as 'Ceylon Refugees', to be pitied, to be assisted, to be tolerated . . . but to whom acceptance has so far been denied and whose alienation will in all likelihood be passed on to be borne by coming generations within this Indian context that demands that all declare their caste, clam or other social grouping. Hence, they will for long remain 'Sri Lankan Repatriates'. They will continue to live in 'Ceylon Colonies'. The Classified Advertisements calling for marriage partners has recently begun to carry the slogan 'Wanted Sri Lankan . . .' We are living in the midst of the formation of new people . . . 'The Ceylonese people in Exile'. Hence one of the statements in your comment raises a note of discord, prompting the writing of this letter.

The statement concerned is as follows: "Although not the 'perfect' or 'ideal' solution to the problem created by the UNP Government in 1984 (which cleverly made use of the fact that these workers voted for the Ceylon Indian Congress and sought to brand them therefore as a foreign Indian element inimical to national interests in our political life) the agreements were seen by the progressive sections of the country to be some improvement on the stateless position of these people". There appears to be some perceptual disorientation in the view behind the statement itself, and considerable doubts have been cast by its content, upon the 'progressive' nature of the progressive sections of the Country referred to therein. In fact the issue it raises can be stated as 'In what direction were these progressives trying to steer the nation's progress'? the answer to which will of course reveal just who these progressives are.

According to this statement, these progressives considered the agreements that legitimise the deportation of these workers, as being 'some improvement on the stateless position of these people'. This would mean that in the view of these progressives these workers were better off facing the prospect of forced deportation than the prospect of continued livelihood in their own country. Moreover since this deportation was considered by these progressives to be an improvement on the stateless position of these workers, it would mean that they considered it better for these workers to be thrown out of their homeland rather than that they be allowed to remain there without their citizenship rights. Hence these progressives were able to see as progress, the reduction in the number of these workers through their forced deportation.

This reduction in the number of these workers amounting to approximately 500,000 persons along with their ever increasing natural increase, would mean a lessening of the numbers of the working class population and a diminishing of its political strength. The removal of these workers from the Island on the basis that they were alien Tamils also served to help the Island 'progress' towards its potential development as the Sinhala Buddhist state that had been portrayed by certain elements within the Buddhist revival movements and which continues to be projected by various interests even today.

Hence it becomes clear that the 'progressive' sections of the Country' who saw the agreements legitimising the deportation of these workers as an improvement in their stateless position were in actuality only seeing, and no doubt deriving some satisfaction from seeing, the country 'progress' towards the elimination of all 'alien' elements and towards the realisation of itself as the Sinhala Buddhist Nation that its national myths and ideology demanded.

The fruits of this progress have been the creation of a new category of stateless people . . . those whose interests are no longer catered for by the state and whose aspirations have earned them its enmity – the community of Ceylonese people in Exile. The existence of these Exiles will be accompanied by all the political unrest and problems their unsettled situation will throw up. These problems can only be solved by their return to their Island home.

Nirmalan Dhas

By courtesy of CHRISTIAN WORKER (Colombo)

Effects of Conflict on Economy – *continued*

Disruption to educational services is impossible to measure, but has clearly been important in the conditions of the last two years. To take only one indicator, there were 44 robberies of schools in 1983, 64 in 1984 and 19 in the first ten months of 1985, totalling more than one robbery for every four schools in the district. There are also reports that significant numbers of recruits to militant organisations are still of school age.

Finally, health services are under strain due to a combination of restricted supplies, difficult operating conditions and increased demand. At Jaffna General Hospital, for instance, there are recurrent shortages of drugs (especially antibiotics and anti-epileptic drugs) and of other supplies such as food supplements, intravenous solutions and especially oxygen. Oxygen must come daily from Colombo by train, and each of the frequent cancellations of the service means cancellation of operations. Conditions of work have eased significantly since the ceasefire, for the curfew involved restrictions on movement in Jaffna that made it hard to transport patients and supplies.

Although some exemptions were in theory permitted for medical purposes, confusion over the interpretation of these exemptions resulted in shootings by the security forces so the effect of the restrictions remained. For example, in spite of the "white flag" exemption for emergencies, the number of admissions to Jaffna Hopsital after 6 pm during the first ten days of December 1984 was seven, compared to 197 in the same period a year earlier (the majority of night-time admissions are emergencies). Transport conditions in November 1985 were better but by no means normal, for the hospital's ambulance is occasionally commandeered by militant organisations and two vans are on permanent "loan". There is also a shortage of staff to contend with. Of a normal operating strength of 80 doctors (normal in the context of a general nationwide shortage of staff), fourteen have left because of the current difficulties, including six consultants. Given a rising demand for medical services due to the crisis (admission rates for physical injury, coronary failure, malnutrition and psychiatric illness are all reported to have risen though it is not clear by how much), and to the large number of refugees entering Jaffna from elsewhere in the island, resources are evidently under significant strain.

To be continued

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ETHNIC CONFLICT *(Continued from last issue)*

TOWARDS A CONSENSUS?

III WHAT HAS FORMED A BASIS FOR CONSENSUS

14. Having looked at what is not there for use to comment upon, we should perhaps move onto what provisions are included, and which ones appear to form a basis for consensus in light of publicly stated comments and the TULF working paper:

(1) Constitutional Basis:

The first basis that both parties appear to agree on is that the PPCs should take the form of a constitutional amendment which allows for a substantial amount of devolution within a unitary constitution. The nature and extent of devolution and whether it should have a federal spirit within a unitary structure is the possible area of contention. Many people including Jehan Perera, the NSSP etc . . . have stated openly that Sinhala fear about the use of the word federalism is unfounded and actually inhibits a solution. The need to balance unitary against federal aspects so as to avoid a referendum is an approach which is a basic premise of the negotiation The Supreme Court will finally decide the outcome but a lot of the juggling and wording of provisions is done with this concern in mind. This leads to awkward documents and prevents a truly effective give and take.

(2) Legislative Power

There is also agreement on the structure of **legislative power** that should be devolved to the units and that the councils should be the product of elections. There is also agreement that the Chief Minister of the Council should be one from a party which commands a majority of the house. He should also be generally responsible for the day to day administration of the province.

(3) Judiciary:

There is also agreement about the structure of the Judiciary, the presence of a high court in each province and the location of the courts of appeal in Colombo.

(4) Subjects to be Devolved:

There also appear to be some agreement on the nature of the subjects to be devolved. Those included in the DDC schedule along with certain aspects of lands and land settlement and law and order. The details of the devolution have yet to be worked out.

In other words, though there are some minor disagreements, there appears to be a consensus on the principles in the areas outlined above. Most of the principles relate to the structure of the devolved units, the elections to take place and the list of subjects.

IV. WHAT ARE THE AREAS OF CONTENTION

Now let us come to the areas of contention among the parties. They are indeed formidable, but perhaps not unbridgeable. In analysing these areas I think we have to accept the basic principle behind a process of negotiation. There can never be agreement on bottom line principles or on rhetorical declarations. Creativity in negotiation requires the formulations of alternative principles which will satisfy aspirations on both sides. It is in this constructive spirit that I will go through the contentious areas of negotiation.

Merger of North & East

16. The first area of contention and I think the area on which the peace process rests is the issue of the merger of the northern and eastern provinces. The proposals as such accept a separate province for the north and a separate province for the east with inter-province co-ordination. The Tamil groups on the other hand want the recognition of a Tamil Linguistic region and a merger of the north and the East into one provincial council.

The government proposals leave the Tamils of the Eastern province, especially in the light of recent events in an extremely vulnerable position. The request of the Tamil groups for merger make the Muslim and Sinhalese populations of the Eastern Province extremely vulnerable. A decision either way will make the east a centre for greater conflict and internecine fighting. Is there any alternative? If there is an alternative, it must rest in a new delimitation of provinces. We do not have to accept British lines of administration. A delimitation may not be ideal, but will in the long-term lessen, conflict and contention among the communities within the respective provinces.

A suggestion for delimitation put forward by some NGO's recently suggests that the Northern province extend to include areas upto Batticaloa but that Trincomalee Port and its environs be under Central Government authority, and that Seruwila District of Trincomalee become part of the North Central Province. A narrow corridor will have to connect Trincomalee District to Batticaloa but given the recent fighting in this area it is already a deserted uninhabited corridor. In addition it is suggested that Amparal become a separate province and perhaps to minimise conflict between the Sinhalese and the Muslims, Amparal electorate could become a part of Moneragala.

There is also a suggestion put forward that the Eastern province be delimited into three, predominantly Sinhala, predominantly Tamil, predominantly Muslim and that after a period of years a decision on delimitation take place. Meanwhile inter-province co-ordination can be the means of operation. These are only suggestions.

I know that there is great resistance to this type of map drawing. There is also resistance to the entrenchment of ethnic boundaries. But do we have an alternative? Is it not necessary to make this new type of delimitation so as to contain conflict so as to make the provincial councils viable in the east, otherwise they will undergo a series of dissolutions and any fragile peace will automatically collapse. With time the natural, I mean natural as opposed to state aided, movements of population will perhaps make the ethnic characteristics of these boundaries non-antagonistic and more compatible.

Executive Power

17. A new area of contention is that with regard to executive powers and the role of the governor. The Tamil groups had earlier suggested the presence of a governor as an intermediary between the President and the provincial council. The Chiddambaram papers envisioned the governor as a **ceremonial ambassador** of the Centre in the periphery who may aquire certain powers only during times of emergency. The government proposals on the other hand move far away from such a suggestion and delegate, (not even devolve) executive power to the Governor. He exercises executive power in the province, as an appointee of the President. This, given the intensity of political conflict in our society will prove to be not only unsalable but also unworkable. In fact it will result in the ultimate centralisation of power. The governor as an effective instrument of the Centre in the Province will lead to the creation of a presidential administration at the local level, going against legislative power of parliament and the provincial councils. It will destroy the democratic potential of any solution. It is in this regard that I think the only feasible alternative is a ceremonial governor, who may acquire some executive powers only during times of emergency. In normal times executive power could be devolved on the Governor but he would then be required to call upon the Chief Minister to execute such powers with regard to provincial administration.

In India, the governor has no powers except during emergency. He may, however, comment on bills passed by the State legislature. The final decision rests with the provincial council. On matters which may be of national importance, however the bill is reserved by the Governor for the consideration of President who may then submit it for consideration by the national judiciary or national legislature. This Indian formulation can be another alternative which would help prevent the governor from becoming an anti-democratic force within the scheme of provincial councils. However the power of reservation should be only present if the bills appear unconstitutional or ultra-vires.

Emergency

18. Emergency power is another area which will be of contention between the parties to the negotiation. In the proposals, it is said that in times of emergency, the president can assume the executive powers of the province. The formulation has yet to be worked out so one cannot comment in detail. However, it is envisioned that the provincial Council law will contain emergency provisions, perhaps different from those contained in the Constitution. In such a context, I think it is necessary that we do not take provincial emergency power in isolation. We already have a framework for repression which is quite substantial. We have the public Security Ordinance. We have the PTA and now we are about to work in emergency provincial councils and provincial administration. This triple-decker framework for repression may make sense in piece-meal but taken together can result in a further thrust toward authoritarian-ism. One should therefore be extremely wary about emergency powers appearing in all areas of the law. The public Security Ordinance may be amended to include the possibility of emergency in the provinces, but one law of emergency, and one standard for emergency formulations exist throughout the country. Emergency should be precisely that the term means – an exception to the normal processes

Continued opposite

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JAFFNA PAYS HOMAGE TO VICTOR

Victor, the Area Commander of the **Liberation Tigers (LTTE),** at Mannar, was killed whilst engaged in a direct confrontation between the **Tigers** and the security forces of the Sri Lankan Government on the 11th October, at Adampan in Mannar, north Sri Lanka. The Sri Lankan army suffered heavy casualties resulting in the death of nine Sri Lankan soldiers and the capture of two who are still being held hostage. The bodies of the dead soldiers were returned to the Sri Lankan army barracks in Jaffna Fort where Captain Kotalawala gratefully took charge within full public view.

The body of **Victor** was brought to Jaffna on the 13th and was lying in state at St. Mary's Cathedral, Jaffna. A Requiem Mass was sung. "Elders and young ones thronged the precincts of the church which was crowded to full capacity. Frequent appeals had to be made through the public address system to ensure order", said the Saturday Review, in reporting the event.

"The whole atmosphere was charged with emotion" and young and old wept aloud. "Jaffna did not see the like of it before", added the report.

The body was later taken in procession through Point Pedro, Valvettiturai, and Thikkam, in a motorcade flanked by members of the LTTE and a huge crowd followed carrying black flags, garlands and wreaths. All along the route people from all walks of life lined the route and paid silent tribute to the valiant soldier who so honourably acquitted himself in the fight for their liberation.

A twenty-one gun salute was given by the LTTE armed group at Point Pedro before a crowd, estimated at over twenty thousand, and a public meeting in his honour was addressed by religious dignitaries of the Hindu, Christian and Muslim sects in a show of solidarity rarely witnessed in recent times. The overwhelming support this tragedy unveiled must necessarily leave the **Tigers** in no doubt as to the popular participation of the people whose cause they continue to espouse. The body of **Victor** later returned to his birthplace in Mannar for the final obsequies.

of law and due processes – not a necessary amendment to every piece of legislation.

Land

19. Another area of contention which has begun to lose its contentious quality is the area of Lands and Land Settlement. The Sinhalese groups have unanimously agreed "that inter-provincial settlement projects should be based on national ethnic quotas." The Tamil groups have been equally vehement that the concept of "Tamil traditional homelands" be recognised and that no settlement should take place which alters the ethnic balance of the North East. Some type of compromise appears to have been worked out at the practical level. Though the government proposals state that the inter-provincial irrigation projects should be based on a national ethnic quota, in practical terms the only project in existence is the Mahaweli. For that particular project, the government has accepted the fact that the ethnic balance of the North-East will not be altered. All Tamil allotments under the national ethnic quota will be settled in the East and will not be altered. This practical accomodation will perhaps go a long way in bringing the parties together. However, Tamil demands with regard to "homelands" and the maintenance of the ethnic balance as of 1947 have been excluded. There are some other reservations. Though land is a devolved subject, statelands even with regard to projects cannot be alienated without presidential permission. Also, statelands involved in non-devolved subjects can be used by the Central Government without consultation of the provincial authorities. This appears to be somewhat arbitary and will lead to confusion. A more constructive scheme for consultation and mutual agreement has to be worked out. I think we should pause for a moment on the subject of lands to note that the demands in this area a few years ago seemed to be irreconciliable. Today, agreement seems to be in the realm of the possible. Though I agree that this is only on paper and that it has yet to be implemented we can state that negotiations carried on between the Ministry of Lands and Mr. Chidambram have produced a more reasonable alternative to what seemed to be an intractable problem.

Law and Order

20. Finally another major area of contention is the question of law and order. The proposals accept the fact that "internal provincial law and order is a devolved subject." This in itself is a major step forward. It would lead to the creation of a national police force and a provincial police force. However, at the provincial level, recruitment will be only up to Chief Inspector and the cadre will be chosen by a panel in which the balance is held by the Centre. There are three members of the panel, two representatives from the Centre one from the province. Given the fact that there are two police forces, given the fact that the CID can investigate in the province under orders of the IGP, given the emergency powers reserved for the centre and the president's right to bring in the armed forces such as army, navy and air force, weighing even recruitment to provincial police in favour of the centre in effect prevents any form of meaningful devolution to the provinces. The restrictions are quite substantial and will probably be amended if the negotiations are to succeed.

Discussion of these details of law and order however, does not come to grips with the magnitude of the real problem of law and order. One cannot discuss the issue of law and order without raising some of the larger issues. How long will the armed forces be in the North and the East after a settlement? Given this fact that the Tamil militant groups control the law and order situation in the North and some parts of the East, what is the process envisioned to invite them to lay down their arms and accept this Provincial Law and Order framework? What is going to be done to the new forces set up in the South who have been either trained to kill, like the STF, or who are para-military units such as the Home Guards. Will they be dismantled? These issues are not even raised by the proposals and yet they are perhaps the most determining for Sri Lanka today.

Conclusion

I have tried to raise some of the issues that have come to my head on the reading of the PPC proposals. They are by means complete but only an introduction to the type of problems and issues we face. I have been trained in the law and social science. The law has always made me optimistic, the legal system believes that for any given situation, there is a formulation for conflict resolution. The social sciences have taught me, that history is always more powerful than the law. If I am optimistic that something may result from this process, it is not an optimism based on scientific reasoning, it is only because I dare not be anything else.

In considering these proposals, and the resultant peace process we must be acutely aware of the alternatives. We have had some experience of these in the past year. As I said before, we no longer have resource to innocence. We have also perhaps learnt relative and absolute truths as part of our collective experience. We have learnt that there are no ultimate solutions, especially to long-term ethnic problems, only relative issues of justice and injustice. However, we have also learnt some fundamental absolute truths. Though issues such as land policy, education structure, taxation, employment etc . . . are negotiable, human life is not. Even as we accept a new framework for the negotiation of political and economic power, we must do so with the realisation that fundamental human rights such as the right to life and security, the right to the due process of law have to be secured and guaranteed. Any State which consistently refuses to give importance to these values will only lead our society toward national disaster. Conflicts that can be contained will become unmanageable, and problems which can be debated will become intractable. When a community believes that it is fighting for its physical survival, it will do so with a force and determination which cannot be easily repressed. Let us hope that all sides to this conflict have at least learnt these lessons from the experience of the past few years.

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Letters to the Editor

Son of The Soil

ON 2ND OCTOBER I went to Vavuniya in north Sri Lanka to attend the funeral of a friend of mine. The shocking news reached me on 1st October and I decided to attend the funeral at any cost. He is dear to me and so are his parents.

The funeral was well attended by people of all communities and of all walks of life. Sadness and grief was written on all faces. The deceased was just 41 and a very successful farmer. His father was at Mamaduwa for a long time. They have lands there and the eldest son took to cultivation with enthusiasm. By hard work and experience he blossomed into a very successful farmer. Farmers of his calibre cannot be produced in months or weeks.

On Tuesday, 30th September he was loading the paddy in his tractor after threshing in his field at Mamaduwa. Some unknown gunmen appeared on the scene and demanded the tractor be given to them. He refused to hand over the tractor which was his main tool for his cultivation. It appears that they were able to get away with the tractor only after destroying him and his co-worker with their guns. On the following morning when the frantic mother went in search of her son to their fields, she saw him lying dead in the field. The soil that nursed and nourished him all these years got enriched by his blood throughout the night. Such traits shown by him could only be attributed to a farmer.

His young widow was wailing over the dead body of her husband. Her youngest daughter, just 7 years, the pet of her father, was heard to say "Mother, do not cry, I am here to look after you". This is the chip off the old block. The farmer's trait is again reflected in his child.

He had two tractors. One was taken away by some young men a few months ago. He could not possibly give up the other too which would have meant the loss of his farming land, his livelihood. The hand that dedicated itself to production was laid to rest.

We know of many cases where farmers gave up their tractors and their interest in farming. But his case is unique. He could not be subdued but only destroyed. This is the spirit that pervades our land.

There are many who realise that we cannot expect peace and plenty in our land, without a rich economy whoever may be at the helm of affairs. There cannot be a stable economy without production. Therefore may I appeal to all concerned that the farming community be not coerced or hindered in the days to come. It is already limping, please do not act knowingly or unknowingly to sabotage it further. The people have to be fed. Let us strive towards that goal.

Kilinochchi **E.S. Theyagarajah**

Flying High

A recent Government communiqué says that the widows and the children of terrorists victims have asked the Sri Lanka Government to fly them to Canada so that they may place their plight before the Canadian Government and the Canadian public. This is no doubt a fine idea.

It would be better, in my opinion if the parents of the 53 Tamil youths slaughtered inside the Welikade jail on the night of 23 July '83 are also given the same facility to explain to the Canadian public the fate that befell their beloved children.

I am sure it would be best if the hundreds, nay thousands of widows, widowers, and orphans created in the Northern and Eastern provinces after the July '83 holocaust in Colombo and the South are also allowed the same facility so that not only Canada but the whole world would understand matters in their correct perspective.

Instead of spending money in flying people to Canada, I would advise them to read the repeated reports of Amnesty International, a fair and impartial body, to understand what is taking place in Sri Lanka today. The latest effort of the Government is an attempt to escape under a smoke screen after the Tissa Weeratunga episode and the foolish belief that attack is the best form of defence, which will convince none least the enlightened Canadians

R.D. Thevathasan
Chunnakam

RANK HYPOCRISY

THE SRI LANKAN Organisation of Professional Associations' President, Dr. Sirilal de Silva's letter to you has received "boxed in" prominence in your issue of September, 1986.

The OPA's policy is to support the integrity and unity of the country and condemn any attempt at division or separation. To solve the ethnic problem the following are some of the methods contemplated by it and perhaps recommended to the Government.

(a) Assuage the fears of the majority

(b) Strengthen naval presence in the northern waters to assure the country's integrity.

(c) Take steps to teach both languages in all schools (this is old hat repeated ad nauseam).

(d) Tamils to re-think their political strategy and consider the benefits of the "Muslim Model" of participation (this one is an insult to the Muslims as well as the Tamils).

One would expect something more serious, more progressive, perhaps something original, from a body of professionals, who also form part of the intelligentsia of the country. North and East of Sri Lanka is in flames. Tamils irrespective of age and sex are being butchered daily. The OPA has not addressed its mind to this aspect. What the Sri Lankan Tamil wants today is "Freedom from FEAR".

Dr. de Silva, like a political baby, believes that this problem could be solved by "dialogue", by dialogue lacking sincerity and based on "rank hypocrisy", a dialogue that throws sand in the eyes of the unsuspecting, a dialogue repeated umpteen number of times witout any result whatsoever.

Thiru Vasagan, Jaffna **K.S. Bala**

LTTE, Genocide and India

MR. V. PRABAHARAN, in an interview with Newsweek, has said that the LTTE is strong enough to take on the 51,000 strong Sri Lanka military (Tamil Times, September '86, Page 5). Page 1 of the same issue states that 47 Tamils were killed by rampaging Sri Lankan security forces in Batticaloa. This rampage followed a car-bomb explosion triggered-off by a militant group along Munai Road in Batticaloa.

Massacring innocent Tamils, in retaliation for land-mine explosions set off by militant groups or in "search operations", is nothing new and has been going on in the Tamil areas from 1983.

If the LTTE is strong enough as claimed by Mr. Prabaharan, why could he not avert all the carnage and bloodshed at the hands of marauding soldiers?

Mr. Prabaharan's argument that India's intervention may allow other international forces to meddle in Sri Lanka's affairs is untenable, since many countries – Pakistan, Israel, USA, to name a few – are already meddling in Sri Lanka's affairs. The bitter fact is that only India's military intervention can avert a Tamil genocide in the island.

With due respect to Mr. Prabaharan, I wish to state that he doesn't like an Indian military intervention, because in case India intervenes militarily, he won't have a say in Tamil Eelam's affairs and either a nominee of the Indian Government or an elected representative of citizens of Eelam will govern Tamil Eelam.

N.S.W., Australia **S. Sivanathan**

CAN WE AFFORD . . .?

THIS LETTER is in response to your appeal for readership participation. While I hope you receive hundreds of letters, may I venture to hope that a fairly large proportion of them will analyse the "Tamil cause", and apportion blame where necessary.

There will be some with distinct ideas such as "The Turks and The Tamils" by K. Vaikunthavasan. I suppose asking the Turkish Government for help is less harmful than addressing a meeting in support of the Sikh cry for Khalistan!

As for Tamil Times, I fully support your desire for "peaceful co-existence, national survival and commitment to a free society".

There was a time I firmly believed that peaceful co-existence was much more difficult to achieve than a separate State. Now I am not so sure. If Tamil self-determination, in a generally acceptable form, can be enshrined in the Sri Lankan constitution, the Sri Lankan Government should be given a chance to implement it. Many Tamils may oppose this point of view, but I believe the time has come for this issue at least to be discussed among Tamils. Some say, after going through all the sufferings, can we afford to give up the Eelam demand? On the question of suffering, what has happened in the past eleven years in Lebanon should compel us to ask: "Can we afford to go on as we are at present?" As for Eelam, if it were to be achieved today, how many of us can put our hands on our hearts and say that there is enough concensus and goodwill among Tamils to run an administration?

May I request Tamil Times to publish thought-provoking articles on the political and economic future of Tamils.

West Australia **N. Karan**

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Canada To Investigate Torture Charges Against Lankan D.P.L.

OTTAWA, Oct. 6 (Reuter)

The Canadian Government will re-open an investigation of charges against the Sri Lankan High Commissioner to Canada following fresh allegations against him of alleged torture and human right abuses, External Affairs Minister Joe Clark said today.

Clark said the investigation was re-opened after the government received sworn statements from a Tamil refugee organisation in Canada with the new charges against Lt. General Tissa Weeratunga.

"I have just this morning received six affidavits in question and I will naturally look into them", Clark told the House of Commons.

Clark told Opposition Party spokesmen he would personally interview the six Tamil refugees who filed the affidavits.

Some of the refugees have asked for anonymity saying they feared reprisals against family members still in Sri Lanka.

Clark said similar allegations, made last month by a Tamil refugee living in Paris, sparked a preliminary inquiry, which did not turn up any information to corroborate the charges.

Weeratunga denied involvement in any of the incidents. The Sri Lankan Government backed his denial.

Canadian officials said the Sri Lankan Government was ultimately responsible for checking the charges. The officials refused to say whether any formal protest would be launched as a result of the investigation.

Canada is recognised for helping refugees and was today awarded a medal from the United Nations in Geneva. ***It was the first time the Nansen Medal, which recognises aid to refugees, was given to a nation rather than an individual.***

An External Affairs department spokesman said similar allegations had been made by members of the Tamil community here before Weeratunga was accepted as Ambassador to Canada last March, but that no official investigation was begun.

Refugee Situation

Since we last went to press and within a matter of 14 days from the 8th October, the Tamil Times reliably understands that a further 48 Tamils have been killed and 280 arrested. Much more tragic, however, is the news that 770 families, all Tamils and Muslims in the Eastern Province, have become refugees. These families are casualties of one single operation at Sambalthivu by the Sri Lankan armed forces.

We give the position of the Refugees as it stood on 30.9.86.

District	No. of Camps	No. of families	No. of persons
Trincomalee	23	5,780	28,746
Batticaloa	5	2,301	10,722
Mullaitivu	8	2,420	10,889
Vavuniya	6	727	3,127
Mannar	2	233	1,047
Kilinochchi	5	280	11,397
Kilinochchi (outside camps)	–	5,300	26,500
Jaffna	11	1,201	5,301
Jaffna (outside camps)	—	—	14,699
Total:	**60**	**18,242**	**102,428**

"CRISIS IN SRI LANKA"

A CONFERENCE on "Crisis in Sri Lanka" was convened jointly by the University of California, Los Angeles, and International Alert against genocide and mass killing on the 25th October at the University of California, Los Angeles, in an effort "to explore possible measures to restrain immediately the present indiscriminate mass killings and to lay the basis for ethnic concilitation which will release the productive energies of the country debilitated by the murderous conflict", as its avowed purpose.

The Conference was chaired by Prof. Stanley Wolpert and the keynote address delivered by Lord Avebury, Chairman of the British Parliamentary Human Rights Group, who drew attention to the gross violations of human rights by the Sri Lankan authorities in contravention of the UN Human Rights Conventions, to which Sri Lanka was a signatory and the documented evidence of hundreds of cases of torture, involuntary disappearances, arbitrary arrests and detention without trial. Lord Avebury also outlined the possible approaches for solution to the ethnic crisis, based on meaningful autonomy for the Tamil areas in Sri Lanka and pointed to the experience of countries like Canada where the sharing of power under a federal structure in a bipolar polity far from encouraging secessionist tendencies, had only led to greater cohesion and integration. Given the past history any agreement between the two communities needed the guarantee of the International Community and in this regard India had a special role to play, he reiterated.

Mr. David Hickley of Amnesty International referred to the numerous studies and publications by AI on Sri Lanka all of which contained carefully researched cases of arbitrary arrests, illegal detention and involuntary disappearances of Tamils in Sri Lanka and deplored the lack of response from the Sri Lankan Government to the explanations sought for such violations of human rights by an independent Organisation which had no political position or affiliation whatever and acknowledged by the International Community. Mr. Paul Nallanayagam, now a Canadian citizen, himself a victim of human rights violations, lent emphasis to the position of AI and gave an eye witness account of mass killing of Tamil youths by the Sri Lankan armed forces and their secret burial without inquest in a mass grave in the Batticaloa district in eastern Sri Lanka.

Prof. Horowitz of the Duke University made a comparative and analyical survey of the ethnic problems in the newly emergent countries and drew attention to the Malaysian model in successfully avoiding the ethnic convulsions that Sri Lanka has been plagued with.

Other speakers included Dr. Karuniyan Arul – former associate Professor of Yale University, the TULF leader Mr. A. Amirthalingam, Dr. Brian Seniwiratne, Consultant Physician and Human Rights activist of Brisbane, Australia, Professor Stanley Thambiah, Chairman of Anthropology, Harvard University, Professor Leo Kuper, Chairman Dept. of Sociology, UCLA, Professor Phillip Trimble, International Law, UCLA, Amita Shastri, Professor of Political Science, UCLA, Messrs Walter Jayawardene, President Sinhala Defence League, B.W. Piyananda, Dharma Buddhist Vihara, and Al Ranmohan of the USA Committee to Stop Genocide, besides Buddhist Reverend Hewanpola Ratnasara of the Dharma Vijaya Buddhist Vihara, Los Angeles and Dr. Ganepola of the Sri Lanka Association of New York.

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of Inpamayam, Kalkudah, wife of the late Joseph Rasiah, mother of Perinpanayagam, Dr. Ariyanayagam, Thambynayagam and Fr. Satkunanayagam,

died 17th October, 1986.

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JAFFNA TAMIL HINDU chartered accountant seeks suitable partner for sister 37 years and brother 35 years. Both science graduates. ***BOX M142,*** *c/o Tamil Times.*

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FATHER SEEKS suitable bride for his bank executive son aged 28 years. ***Box M143,*** *c/o Tamil Times.*

OBITUARY

The death occurred on 4th October, 1986 of **MR. GUNARATNAM BALASINGAM,** Estimator, G.E.C., Coventry. He was the second son of the late Mr. A. Gunaratnam, Chartered Accountant, British Civil Service, Burma and Mrs. Gunaratnam, brother of Jeyasingam, Rajamohan of Vaddukoddai, the late Tharmarajah of Karaveddi, Nathan of Croydon, Mrs. S. P. Selvaratnam, Colombo and Mrs. M. Paramalingam, South Africa.

He was deeply loved and is greatly missed by all his friends and relations.

May his soul rest in peace.

50, Leighton Street, West Croydon, Surrey

G.S. Nathan
Phone: 01-688 7294

SORNAM, wife of R. M. Gunaratnam, (Retd Vice-Principal, Hartley College), sister of K. Pooranampillai, K. Theivananthampillai (Fiji), Gnani Nalliah, mother of Sarojini Jayaratnam (UK), Marcus (Australia), David (Trinidad) and Thevi Shanmuganathan (France). 20 Perinpanayagam Lane, Chundikuli.

APPRECIATION

MANO KADIRGAMAR

Mano Kadirgamar who suffered a heart-attack in 1985 passed away on 19th October, 1986 after surgery at Harefield Hospital.

Any person's death is a diminishing experience for those who survive, but the sense of loss of Mano's departure is all the more acute for those who knew him to be gregarious by instinct and an extrovert by nature. Even during his long illness he stubbornly maintained this life style and remained a focal point for numerous mutual friends who would never have been in touch with each other if not for Mano's binding force. This required tremendous courage and determination and he had this in ample measure.

Mano had most of his education at Jaffna College where he excelled in sport. His achievements there in cricket and tennis are legendary. His great passion for tennis remained with him throughout his life. In the month before he suffered his heart attack, he was runner-up for the mixed doubles title in the Lloyds Bank tournament having won the singles title in previous years. Also, for several yers he held the singles title at his local Tithe Farm Club.

Mano made a career for himself in banking, in which profession he held his own both during his time with the Bank of Ceylon and later at Lloyds Bank where he was a manager in the Exports Credit Department at the time of his death. He was held in very high esteem at his workplace and predictably popular with his colleagues there.

Mano was one of the early Sri Lankan residents in Harrow and many of those who live here now remember with gratitude the great pleasure with which he gave everyone a helping hand until they settled down. This kindness and the great urge to be of assistance, he extended to everyone who touched his life. In recent years he shared with all of us the concern for the problems of the Tamils in Sri Lanka. He served a term on the executive Committee of SCOT and was very supportive for any efforts to relieve the sufferings of the Tamils.

During a visit to Mano's house after his death, I noticed a poster on one of the doors which read – "Christianity is like tennis; if you serve well you cannot lose". I felt it adequately summed up Mano's life. He served well – he did not lose. But those who survived him have indeed lost – Ranee a loving husband, Ajit and Nina a caring father and all of us a very good friend.

C.K.

SCOT
Seasonal Events

(Net proceeds for Tamil Refugee Relief and Rehabilitation)

Lola Jones Hall, Greaves Place, off Garratt Lane, Tooting, London SW17

Sunday, 21 December
commencing 6pm
Musical evening – Dinner – Disco
Adults £5, Children under 12 £2

Sunday, 4 January
commencing 1pm
New Year Lunch
Adults £4, Children under 12 £1

Tickets available from The Treasurer, SCOT, 181 Torbay Road, Harrow, Middx. HA2 9QF (Tel: 01-422 8984).

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

The Standing Committee of Tamil-speaking People (SCOT) has organised a Christmas get-together for Sunday 21st December 1986 at Lola Jones Hall, Greaves Place, off Garratt Lane, Tooting, London SW17. The celebrations commence at 6pm with a musical evening, followed by dinner and disco dancing. Tickets priced at £5 for adults and £2 for children under 12 are available from The Treasurer, 181 Torbay Road, Harrow, Middx., Telephone: 01-422 8984.

* * *

The SCOT New Year Lunch will be held on Sunday 4th January, 1987 at Lola Jones Hall, commencing at 1pm. Tickets £4 for adults and £1 for children under 12 are available from the Treasurer, 181 Torbay Road, Harrow, Middx. Telephone 01-422 8984.

WEST LONDON TAMIL SCHOOL

Grade I exams

in Tamil, Bharata Natyam, Vocal Music, Violin, Veena and Mirithangam (in accordance with the syllabus agreed at the Acton Mother Tongue Conference) will be held on 24 and 31 January, 1987.

Youth Exchange Programme

(with Tamilnadu) July–August 1987. 15 students between 16 and 25 years will be offered subsidised airfares and other concessions for a 4 weeks' cultural tour of South India.

Dance & Music Teachers

Vacancies exist for qualified teachers in Bharata Natyam (Kalakshetra style) & Vocal Music. *For further details, please write to The Headmaster, 179 Norval Rd., N. Wembley, Middx. HA0 3SX.*

FLUTE ARANGETRAM

Mayura, daughter of Mr & Mrs R. Mahadevan of Malden Rd., New Malden, Surrey and student of Mrs Rudrani Balakrishnan entertained a packed audience of friends and well wishers at her Flute arangetram recital, on 18th October, 1986 at St. Mathews Hall, Spencer Rd., Wimbledon, London SW20. It was the first ever performance by a girl on the flute in the UK and Mayura excelled in her rendering of the different ragas much to the delight of her guru who accompanied her on the violin.

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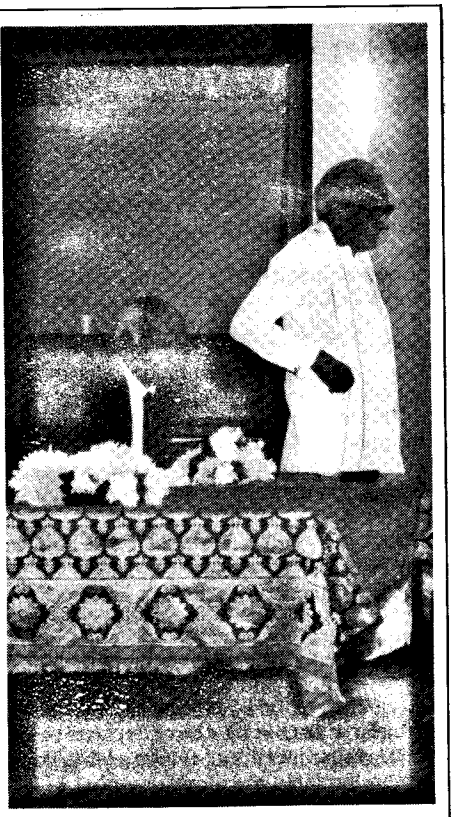
Skanda Felicitates Its Past Principal

"Some educational institutions selected the pupils to whom they gave admission but admission to Skanda Varodaya College was based on the important promise that education was the inalienable night of every child, irrespective of background or ability. It was Mr Subramaniam's commitment to this concept that enabled him to offer places in Skanda to everyone in need, to continue his or her education.

What was a village school, became a special grade institution in the island, hitting the headlines with the highest number of entrants to the University from the Peninsula and with excellent achievements in the field of sports", said Mr. N. S. Kandiah speaking at a lunch organised to felicitate Mr. C. Subramaniam, Emeritus Principal, Skanda Varodaya College, Jaffna, held on Sunday 9th November, 1986 at Lola Jones Hall, Tooting, London SW17. Continuing Mr. Kandiah said, "it is often said that what a teacher achieves after several years of committed service to the community is not anything material, but the pleasure and satisfaction of seeing his or her students doing well in life. I believe Mr. Subramaniam would have had that pleasure and satisfaction in ample measure today".

Mr. P. Rajanayagam referred to his role in the political scene of Jaffna as Secretary of the Jaffna Youth Congress. Mr. Subramaniam replying spoke on the steps he had taken to build up the College from its modest beginnings and thanked all those present for honouring him in that manner.



Appreciation

FR. PHILIP PONNIAH

A charismatic priest endowed with a pioneering skill and tactful leadership and with a long proud service of nearly half a century, Rev. Fr. Philip Ponniah now takes charge of Our Lady of Refuge, Jaffna in the evening of his life.

He has the distinction of having undergone the first Evangelical work under the internationally renowned polyglot Rev. Fr. Gnanapiragasar at Nallur.

He proceeded to Rome in 1945 where he was conferred a doctorate in Canon Law – summa Cum laude.

On returning to Jaffna in 1950, he was appointed the parish priest of Kayts. In 1953 he started a new mission at Cheddikulam where he built over twelve churches.

His erudition and untiring zeal elevated him to the position of the director of St. Martin's Seminary and General Manager of Catholic Schools in the Diocese during the period 1956 to 1961.

After he served in Kilinochchi, Jaffna Cathedral, Vavuniya, Mankulam, Naranthanai, Kopay and Mathagal, in 1980, he was appointed as the first Rector, of St. Francis Xavier's Seminary, Colombagam which from its small beginnings, of five students, rose up to have a substantial student population with its faculties of Philosophy and Theology.

He had the distinction of having been the President of diocesan court for thirty long years and the counsellor for the Bishop of Jaffna.

While being Rector of the Seminary and the Director of Evangelical commission, he started two new missions at Maniyamthoddam and Uthayapuram in the suburb of Jaffna.

May the Almighty grant him longevity so that the people may have the fortune to avail themselves of his inexhaustible fund of knowledge and the benefits of his selfless service both in the spiritual and temporal spheres.

Karaveddi **V. Mahalingam**

By courtesy, Saturday Review 4th Oct, '86

Note: We sincerely regret the grievous error in our October Issue and express our unreserved apologies to Fr. Ponniah, and all concerned. *Editor*

London Tamil Congregation

CHRISTMAS CAROL SERVICE

at 3.45 p.m.

on Sunday, 14th December

WATCH-NIGHT SERVICE

Wednesday, 31st December, at 11 p.m.

The Putney Methodist Church, Gwendolen Ave, London SW15

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THE LEAGUE OF FRIENDS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF JAFFNA
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Called to the Bar

Mr. Bala Nadarajah was admitted to the Bermuda Bar after seven years in the civil service. However, he will soon be leaving the Island to take a position with the Washington-based law firm Hanson, O'Brian, Birney and Butler.

Mr. Nadarajah, who is a member of the Bar in Sri Lanka, has worked on the legal aspects of international business in Bermuda for the Registrar of Companies.

He dedicated his appointment to his father Mr. K. V. Nadarajah, who was a lawyer in Sri Lanka for 54 years.

Standing in front of the Supreme Court is the newest member of the local Bar, Mr. Bala Nadarajah.

Pupils at the West London Tamil school celebrated the Navaratri festival in honour of the patron of education, Goddess Saraswati, with dances, songs and music. The school's second *London Tamil Reader*, funded by a £1,000 grant from the Council of Churches is available from the Headmaster at 179 Norval Road, Wembley, Middlesex HA0 3SX, price £1.50.

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INDIAN CRACKDOWN ON TAMIL MILITANTS

Continued from page 1

publicity given to the police operation and the details of the weaponry seized add weight to the theory that there were more important reasons for this action.

The background to the crackdown against the Tamil militants, as seen by political observers in New Delhi, is the Indian government's view that the current set of proposals put forward by the Sri Lankan President for a political solution of the ethnic conflict contain many positive aspects which could form the basis for a resumption of meaningful negotiations. There is no doubt that the Tamil militant groups have incurred the displeasure of some influential quarters in New Delhi by summarily rejecting Sri Lanka's proposals in spite of the several attempts made by senior Indian Ministers and officials of the Central government to persuade the militants to agree to negotiate on the proposals. Even M. G. Ramachandran, the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu is reported to be displeased with the Tamil militants' response.

Another factor precipitating the crackdown would appear to be the reported announcement by the LTTE that they were going to print and circulate their own currency in the northern Tamil areas of Sri Lanka and their proposal to set up their own administration from January 1987, which has been characterised as an act of unilateral declaration of independence. It appears that President Jayawardene approached Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi to warn him of the danger posed by these announcements by the LTTE, and that unless the militants agreed to negotiations within a matter of weeks, he would have no alternative but to launch a major military offensive, including aerial bombardment of the northern Jaffna district. He is also reported to have told Rajiv Gandhi that something should be done by the time the President went to the SAARC summit at Bangalore in mid-November.

While opinion in India is generally supportive of the limited action taken against the militants, New Delhi is acutely aware that it cannot afford to alienate the feelings of the mass of the Tamil people of South India by going all out against the Tamil militants. In fact the government of India is keen to ensure that Colombo should not read the action taken against the militants "as evidence of any dimunition or withdrawal of Indian support for the Tamil position in the larger dispute over autonomy". It is in pursuance of this line, India warned Sri Lanka on 14 November not to over-estimate the crackdown on Tamil militants as a licence to launch a new offensive in northern Sri Lanka amidst reports that Colombo had moved about 10,000 troops to the frontiers of northern Jaffna. The Indian warning was delivered by Foreign Minister, Mr. Narayan Dutt Tiwari during an hour's meeting with his Sri Lankan counterpart, Mr. Sahul Hameed. He is understood to have stressed that Indian public opinion remained sympathetic to the Tamil demand for a greater say in their own affairs, even though it might not support a separate state of Eelam.

On the Madras Shooting Incident

The news that certain members belonging to a particular Liberation Group had deemed it necessary to open fire on a crowd in India, in Thiru Valluvar Nagar recently, has taken the Tamil community here and abroad by surprise, shock and shame. Whatever the provocation, however justified the arguments may be, we as Tamils cannot and will not submit to the use of force as the first available weapon to resolve all difference of opinion or even confrontation, wherever it may occur.

This is not to preach a homily but rather to maintain a tradition and preserve a cultural attitude that we are so proud of and in the name of which we continue a struggle.

As for India, her neutrality has already become suspect, at least in the eyes of the Sri Lankan government and her intervention in our struggle appears more and more as a delicate exercise in the art of brinkmanship. To add to her difficulties by injudicious and foolhardy incidents of this nature is, to say the least, to cut the ground under our own feet.

To reiterate the obvious, India has accommodated the largest number of Sri Lankan refugees, almost a hundred and fifty thousand, ever since the July '83 pogrom and even earlier. In no other part of the world could we find such understanding and sympathy for our cause. All this said, among the hundreds of civilians affected by this strife, it is not unnatural to find a handful, mental aberrations apart, who react to personal misfortune in a manner they have come to believe as the most successful. But this is a different kettle of fish altogether. The Sri Lankan Tamil community roundly condemns this action as abhorrent and totally unbecoming, without any reservation whatsoever.

India has since delivered such a stinging smack to all the liberation groups, not merely to the individuals or the particular group involved, that creates the impression that there is more to it than meets the eye. The over-blown reaction and the disproportionate punishment meted out, despite the meek submission and expression of remorse by those concerned, and viewed against the backdrop of persistent militant refusal for a compromise on ideological attitudes against practical realities, the Prime Minister of India is perhaps convinced that his forthcoming meeting with Mr. J. R. Jayawardene in Bangalore, should produce the solution acceptable to India, if not to the Tamils themselves.

India's integrity and credentials have never been in doubt as far as the Tamils are concerned. Mr. Clean has always shown that he is pure in his intentions – clean almost to a fault. The credentials of the other negotiating party in the conflict have always been in doubt with the Tamils and the credibility gap created by the U-turn, after agreeing to the proposals contained in the since famous Annexure C, and the subsequent conduct and procrastination of the Sri Lankan Government, permits only a wild hope. Meanwhile to disarm the Militants whose strategy has thus far had the most telling effect in such a protracted conflict is to put the problem back to square one, besides throwing the Militants and the Tamils in general to the wolves, so to speak. If however this whole exercise is a piece of strategy in the achievement of the rights of the Tamils, then India has assumed an open responsibility for the welfare of the Sri Lankan Tamils which she cannot now shrug off.

Ontario, Canada
15.11.86

S. K. Ratnam

Teachers Call For Talks With Militants

NORTHERN PROVINCE Teachers' Association has appealed to the Government to hold talks with Tamil militant groups in its endeavour to find a solution to the ethnic problem.

This appeal was made at its annual general meeting held at Jaffna Hindu College, Mr. T. Puwanasunthararasa chaired.

Mr. H. N. Fernando, President of the Ceylon Teachers' Union stated that the proposed Provincial Councils would not satisfy the aspirations of the Tamil people.

He went on to state that the establishment of army camps in the North amid the civilian population in school premises or close to schools had caused irreparable damage to education.

BOY HERO

*A FOURTEEN YEAR OLD schoolboy **Kes Somasunderam** gave his life in his attempt to save a girl from the same school who was about to be run over by a coach which apparently had lost control. "I saw Kes give the little girl a push to get her out of the way – but then he disappeared", said one of the occupants of the coach. Kes Somasundram was dragged underneath the coach with his legs broken and crushed.*

Surgeons at Salisbury General Hospital battled to save his legs but he later succumbed to his injuries. His father Dr B. Somasunderam is attached to the Old Manor Hospital, Salisbury.

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